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FIVE ESSAYS,

ON

*PICTURESQUE SUBJECTS;*

WITH A

POEM ON LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

Strahan and Preston,  
Printers-Street, London.

*W. B. Keith*

THREE ESSAYS:

*G. B. Brown*  
*26<sup>th</sup> June 1838*

ON

PICTURESQUE BEAUTY;

ON

PICTURESQUE TRAVEL;

AND ON

SKETCHING LANDSCAPE:

WITH A POEM, ON

LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

TO THESE ARE NOW ADDED

TWO ESSAYS,

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRINCIPLES AND MODE IN WHICH THE  
AUTHOR EXECUTED HIS OWN DRAWINGS.

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By WILLIAM GILPIN, A.M.

PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY; AND VICAR OF BOLDRE IN  
NEW-FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

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THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1808.





( v )

**A**N Apology may be necessary for presenting a new Edition of a Work, in a more enlarged form than the one in which it was published by its author. But the two Essays which are added to the present republication, tho written by him for a particular purpose, contain so much general precept on the art of drawing, and are in themselves so natural an appendage to the three Essays on *Pictureſque Beauty*, &c. that the Editors conceive they are only forwarding the wiſhes of the author, and preſenting a more connected view of his valuable inſtruction, already before the public, by bringing them forward in their preſent ſhape.

In the year 1802, and in a ſubſequent one, Mr. Gilpin prepared a number of drawings for ſale, the produce of his own pencil, for the endowment of a ſchool for the benefit of the day-labouring part of the pariſhioners of Boldre, and affixed the two Eſſays to the ſale catalogues, for which they were particularly written. It is to theſe ſales that remarks in the Eſſays ſo frequently refer. It was at firſt intended to omit,



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have several times been surprized at finding us represented, as supposing, *all beauty* to consist in *picturesque beauty*—and the face of nature to be examined *only by the rules of painting*. Whereas, in fact, we always speak a different language. We speak of the grand scenes of nature, tho uninteresting in a *picturesque light*, as having a strong effect on the imagination—often a stronger, than when they are properly disposed for the pencil. We every where make a distinction between scenes, that are *beautiful, amusing*, or otherwise pleasing; and scenes that are *picturesque*. We examine, and admire both. Even artificial objects we admire, whether in a grand, or in a humble stile, tho unconnected with picturesque beauty—the palace, and the cottage—the improved garden-scene, and the neat homestead. Works of tillage also afford us equal delight—the plough, the mower, the reaper, the hay-field, and the harvest-wane. In a word, we reverence, and admire the works of God; and look with benevolence, and pleasure, on the works of men.

In

In what then do we offend? At the expence of no other species of beauty, we merely endeavour to illustrate, and recommend *one* species more; which, tho among the most interesting, hath never yet, so far as I know, been made the set object of investigation. From scenes indeed of the *picturesque kind* we exclude the appendages of tillage, and in general the works of men; which too often introduce preciseness, and formality. But excluding artificial objects from one species of beauty, is not degrading them from all. We leave then the general admirer of the beauties of nature to his own pursuits; nay we admire them with him: all we desire, is, that he would leave us as quietly in the possession of one source of amusement more.

Under this apology, my dear sir, I have ventured, in the following essays, to enlarge a little both on our theory, and practice. In the first essay (that we may be fairly understood) the *distinguishing characteristic* is marked,

of

of *such beautiful objects*, as are suited to the pencil. In the second, the mode of amusement is pointed out, that may arise from viewing the scenes of nature in a picturesque light: and in the third, a few rules are given for sketching landscape after nature. I have practised drawing as an amusement, and relaxation, for many years; and here offer the result of my experience. Some readiness in *execution* indeed, it is supposed, is necessary, before these rules can be of much service. They mean to take the young artist up, where the drawing-master leaves him. — I have only to add farther, that as several of the rules, and principles here laid down, have been touched in different picturesque works, which I have given the public, I have endeavoured not to repeat myself: and where I could not throw new light on a subject, I have hastened over it: — only in a work of this kind, it was necessary to bring them together in one view.

With

With regard to the poem, annexed to these essays, something more should be said. As that small part of the public, who personally know me; and that still smaller part, whom I have the honour to call my friends, may think me guilty of presumption in attempting a work of this kind, I beg leave to give the following history of it.

Several years ago, I amused myself with writing a few lines in verse on landscape-painting; and afterwards sent them, as a fragment (for they were not finished) to amuse a friend\*. I had no other purpose. My friend told me, he could not say much for my *poetry*; but as my *rules*, he thought, were good, he wished me to finish my fragment; and if I should not like it as a *poem*, I might turn it into an *essay in prose*. — As this was only what I expected, I was not disappointed; tho not encouraged to proceed. So

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\* Edward Forster, Esq. ; of Walthamstow.

I troubled my head no farther with my verses.

Some time after, another friend\*, finding fault with my mode of describing the lakes and mountains of Cumberland, and Westmoreland, as too poetical, I told him the fate of my fragment; lamenting the hardship of my case — when I wrote verse, one friend called it prose; and when I wrote prose, another friend called it verse. In his next letter he desired to see my verses; and being pleased with the subject, he offered, if I would finish my poem (however carelessly as to metrical exactness) he would adjust the versification. But he found, he had engaged in a more arduous task, than he expected. My rules, and technical terms were stubborn, and would not easily glide into verse; and I was as stubborn, as they, and would not relinquish the scientific part for the poetry. My friend's

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\* Rev. Mr. Maſon.



good-nature therefore generally gave way, and suffered many lines to stand, and many alterations to be made, which his own good taste could not approve \*. I am afraid therefore I must appear to the world, as having spoiled a good poem: and must shelter myself, and it, under those learned reasons, which have been given for putting *Propria quæ maribus*, and *As in præfenti*, into verse. If the rules have injured the poetry; as *rules* at least, I

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\* Extract of a letter from Mr. Mason.

“ I have inserted conscientiously every word, and phrase, you have altered; except the awkward word *clump*, which I have uniformly discarded, whenever it offered itself to me in my English garden, which you may imagine it did frequently: in it's stead I have always used *tuft*. I have ventured therefore to insert it adjectively; and I hope, I shall be forgiven. Except in this single instance, I know not that I have deviated in the least from the alterations, you sent. — I now quit all that relates to the poem, not without some self-satisfaction in thinking it is over: for, to own the truth, had I thought you would have expected such almost mathematical *exactitude of terms*, as I find you do; and in consequence turned lines tolerably poetical, into prosaic, for the sake of precision, I should never have ventured to give you my assistance.”

hope,

( xiv )

hope, they will meet your approbation. I am,  
dear sir, with the greatest esteem, and regard,

Your sincere,

and most obedient,

humble servant,

WILLIAM GILPIN.

*Vicar's-hill,  
October 12, 1791.*

# EXPLANATION

OF THE

## PRINTS.

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Two facing page 19. It is the intention of these two prints to illustrate how very adverse the idea of *smoothness* is to the *composition* of landscape. In the second of them the *great lines* of the landscape are exactly the same as in the first; only they are *more broken*.

Two facing p. 75. The first of these prints is meant to illustrate the idea of *simple illumination*. The light falls strongly on *various* parts; as indeed it often does in nature. But, as it is the painter's business to take nature in her most beautiful form, he chuses to throw his light more into a *mass*, as represented in the second print, which exhibits the *same landscape*, only better inlightened. When we merely take the *lines* of a landscape from nature; and *inlighten* it (as we must often do) from our own taste, and judgment, the massing of the light must be well attended to, as one of the great sources of beauty. It must not be scattered

scattered in spots; but must be brought more together, as on the rocky side of the hill in the second print: and yet it must graduate also in different parts; so as not to appear affected.

One print facing p. 77. The idea of *gradation* is here farther illustrated; according to the explanation in p. 76. — The inscription is that admired one of Cæcilia Metella, the daughter of Metellus, and the wife of Crassus; in which, with so much elegant, and tender simplicity, her name is divided between her father, and her husband.

One facing p. 79. This print exemplifies a *simple mode* of *tinting* a drawing, as explained in the text. The colouring of this print (which is done by hand) has added a little to the expence of the book: but it was thought necessary to compleat the scheme. — It was coloured by a relation of mine; Mr. Gilpin, drawing-master at Paddington-green; who in all the copies I have seen, has illustrated my ideas very satisfactorily; and who, as far as the recommendation of a partial kinsman may go, deserves mine.

One facing p. 85. This print is an explanation of a few rules in perspective; just sufficient for the use of common landscape.

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\* \* \* *Four Prints belonging to the Two ADDITIONAL ESSAYS are sufficiently explained in the pages facing which they are respectively placed.*

ES-

**E S S A Y I.**

**ON**

**PICTURESQUE BEAUTY.**



## ESSAY I.

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**D**ISPUTES about beauty might perhaps be involved in less confusion, if a distinction were established, which certainly exists, between such objects as are *beautiful*, and such as are *picturesque* — between those, which please the eye in their *natural state*; and those, which please from some quality, capable of being *illustrated by painting*.

Ideas of beauty vary with objects, and with the eye of the spectator. The stone-mason sees beauties in a well-jointed wall, which escape the architect, who surveys the building under a different idea. And thus the painter, who compares his object with the rules of his art, sees it in a different light from the man of general taste, who surveys it only as simply beautiful.

As this difference therefore between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque* appears really to exist, and must depend on some peculiar construction of the object; it may be worth while to examine, what that peculiar construction is. We inquire not into the *general sources of beauty*, either in nature, or in representation. This would lead into a nice, and scientific discussion, in which it is not our purpose to engage. The question simply is, *What is that quality in objects, which particularly marks them as picturesque?*

In examining the *real object*, we shall find, one source of beauty arises from that species of elegance, which we call *smoothness*, or *neatness*; for the terms are nearly synonymous. The higher the marble is polished, the brighter the silver is rubbed, and the more the mahogany shines, the more each is considered as an object of beauty: as if the eye delighted in gliding smoothly over a surface.

In the class of larger objects the same idea prevails. In a pile of building we wish to see neatness in every part added to the elegance of the architecture. And if we examine a piece of improved pleasure-ground, every thing rough, and slovenly offends.

Mr.



Mr. Burke, enumerating the properties of beauty, considers *smoothness* as one of the most essential. "A very considerable part of the effect of beauty, says he, is owing to this quality: indeed the most considerable: for take any beautiful object, and give it a broken, and rugged surface, and however well-formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer. Whereas, let it want ever so many of the other constituents, if it want not this, it becomes more pleasing, than almost all the others without it."\* ————

How far Mr. Burke may be right in making smoothness the *most considerable* source of beauty, I rather doubt†. A considerable one it certainly is,

Thus

\* Upon the sublime and beautiful, page 213.

† Mr. Burke is probably not very accurate in what he farther says on the connection between *beauty*, and *diminutives*. — Beauty excites love; and a loved object is generally characterized by diminutives. But it does not follow, that all objects characterized by diminutives, tho they may be so because they are loved, are therefore beautiful. We often love them for their moral qualities; their affections; their gentleness; or their docility. Beauty, no doubt, awakens love; but also excites admiration, and respect. This combination forms the sentiment, which prevails, when we look

Thus then, we suppose, the matter stands with regard to *beautiful objects in general*. But in *picturesque representation* it seems somewhat odd, yet perhaps we shall find it equally true, that the reverse of this is the case; and that the ideas of *neat* and *smooth*, instead of being picturesque, in reality strip the object, in which they reside, of all pretensions to *picturesque beauty*. — Nay, farther, we do not scruple to assert, that *roughness* forms the most essential point of difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*; as it seems to be that particular quality, which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting. — I use the general term *roughness*; but properly speaking roughness relates only to the surfaces of bodies: when we speak of their delineation, we use the word *ruggedness*. Both ideas however equally enter into the picturesque; and both are observable in the

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at the Apollo of Belvidere, and the Niobe. No man of nice discernment would characterize these statues by diminutives. — There is then a beauty, between which and diminutives there is no relation; but which, on the contrary, excludes them: and in the description of figures, possessed of that species of beauty, we seek for terms, which recommend them more to our *admiration* than our *love*.

smaller,

smaller, as well as in the larger parts of nature — in the outline, and bark of a tree, as in the rude summit, and craggy sides of a mountain.

Let us then examine our theory by an appeal to experience; and try how far these qualities enter into the idea of *picturesque beauty*; and how far they mark that difference among objects, which is the ground of our inquiry.

A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree. The proportion of it's parts — the propriety of it's ornaments — and the symmetry of the whole may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet instead of the chissel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a *smooth* building we must turn it into a *rough* ruin. No painter, who had the choice of the two objects, would hesitate which to chuse.

Again, why does an elegant piece of garden-ground make no figure on canvas? The shape

is pleasing; the combination of the objects, harmonious; and the winding of the walk in the very line of beauty. All this is true; but the *smoothness* of the whole, tho right, and as it should be in nature, offends in picture. Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground: plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs: break the edges of the walk: give it the rudeness of a road; mark it with wheel-tracks; and scatter around a few stones, and brush-wood; in a word, instead of making the whole *smooth*, make it *rough*; and you make it also *picturesque*. All the other ingredients of beauty it already possessed.

You sit for your picture. The master, at your desire, paints your head combed smooth, and powdered from the barber's hand. This may give it a more striking likeness, as it is more the resemblance of the real object. But is it therefore a more pleasing picture? I fear not. Leave Reynolds to himself, and he will make it picturesque by throwing the hair dishevelled about your shoulders. Virgil would have done the same. It was his usual practice in all his portraits. In his figure of Ascanius, we have the *fusos crines*; and in his portrait  
of

of Venus, which is highly finished in every part, the artist has given her hair,

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*diffundere ventis* \*.

Modern poets also, who have any ideas of natural beauty, do the same. I introduce Milton to represent them all. In his picture of Eve, he tells us, that

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to her slender waste  
Her unadorned golden tresses were  
Dishevelled, and in wanton ringlets waved.

That lovely face of youth smiling with all it's sweet, dimpling charms, how attractive is

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\* The roughness, which Virgil gives the hair of Venus, and Ascanius, we may suppose to be of a different kind from the squalid roughness, which he attributes to Charon :

Portitor has horrendus aquas, et flumina servat  
Terribili squalore Charon, cui plurima mento  
Canities inculta jacet.

Charon's roughness is, in it's kind, picturesque also ; but the roughness here intended, and which can only be introduced in elegant figures, is of that kind, which is merely opposed to hair in nice order. In describing Venus, Virgil probably thought hair, when *streaming in the wind*, both beautiful, and picturesque, from it's undulating form, and varied tints ; and from a kind of life, which it assumes in motion ; tho perhaps it's chief recommendation to him, at the moment, was, that it was a feature of the character, which Venus was then assuming.

it

it in life ! how beautiful in representation ! It is one of those objects, that please, as many do, both in nature, and on canvas. But would you see the human face in it's highest form of *picturesque beauty*, examine that patriarchal head. What is it, which gives that dignity of character ; that force of expression ; those lines of wisdom and experience ; that energetic meaning, so far beyond the rosy hue, or even the bewitching smile of youth ? What is it, but the forehead furrowed with wrinkles ? the prominent cheek-bone, catching the light ? the muscles of the cheek strongly marked, and losing themselves in the shaggy beard ? and, above all, the austere brow, projecting over the eye — the feature which particularly struck Homer in his idea of Jupiter\*, and which  
 he

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\* It is much more probable, that the poet copied *forms* from the sculptor, who must be supposed to understand them better, from having studied them more ; than that the sculptor should copy them from the poet. Artists however have taken advantage of the pre-possession of the world for Homer to secure approbation to their works by acknowledging them to be reflected images of his conception. So Phidias assured his countrymen, that he had taken his Jupiter from the description of that god in the first book of Homer. The fact is, none of the features contained in that image, except the brow, can be  
 rendered

he had probably seen finely represented in some statue; in a word, what is it, but the *rough* touches of age?

As an object of the mixed kind, partaking both of the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*, we admire the human figure also. The lines, and surface of a beautiful human form are so infinitely varied; the lights and shades, which it receives, are so exquisitely tender in some parts, and yet so round, and bold in others; it's proportions are so just; and it's limbs so fitted to receive all the beauties of grace, and

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rendered by sculpture. But he knew what advantage such ideas, as his art could express, would receive from being connected in the mind of the spectator with those furnished by poetry; and from the just partiality of men for such a poet. He seems therefore to have been as well acquainted with the mind of man, as with his shape, and face. — If by *καυενουσι τροφους*, we understand, as I think we may, a *projecting brow*, which casts a broad, and deep shadow over the eye, Clarke has rendered it ill by *nigris superciliis*, which most people would construe into *black eye-brows*. Nor has Pope, tho he affected a knowledge of painting, translated it more happily by *sable eye-brows*. — But if Phidias had had nothing to recommend him, except his having availed himself of the only feature in the poet, which was accommodated to his art, we should not have heard of inquirers wondering from whence he had drawn his ideas; nor of the compliment, which it gave him an opportunity of paying to Homer.

contrast;

contrast; that even the face, in which the charms of intelligence, and sensibility reside, is almost lost in the comparison. But altho the human form in a quiescent state, is thus beautiful; yet the more it's *smooth surface* is *ruffled*, if I may so speak, the more picturesque it appears. When it is agitated by passion, and it's muscles swoln by strong exertion, the whole frame is shewn to the most advantage.——But when we speak of muscles swoln by exertion, we mean only natural exertions, not an affected display of anatomy, in which the muscles, tho justly placed, may still be overcharged.

It is true, we are better pleased with the usual representations we meet with of the human form in a quiescent state, than in an agitated one; but this is merely owing to our seldom seeing it naturally represented in strong action. Even among the best masters we see little knowledge of anatomy. One will inflate the muscles violently to produce some trifling effect: another will scarce swell them in the production of a laboured one. The eye soon learns to see a defect, tho unable to amend it. But when the anatomy is perfectly just, the human body will always be more picturesque  
in



in action, than at rest. The great difficulty indeed of representing strong muscular motion, seems to have struck the ancient masters of sculpture: for it is certainly much harder to model from a figure in strong, momentary action, which must, as it were, be shot flying; than from one sitting, or standing, which the artist may copy at leisure. Amidst the variety of statues transmitted from their hands, we have only three, or four in very spirited action\*. Yet when we see an effect of this kind well executed, our admiration is greatly increased. Who does not admire the Laocoon more than the Antinous?

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\* Tho there are only perhaps two or three of the first antique statues in *very spirited* action — the Laocoon, the fighting gladiator, and the boxers — yet there are several others, which are *in action* — the Apollo Belvidere — Michael Angelo's Torso — Arris and Pæna — the Pietas militaris, sometimes called the Ajax, of which the Pasquin at Rome is a part, and of which there is a repetition more entire, tho still much mutilated, at Florence — the Alexander and Bucephalus; and perhaps some others, which occur not to my memory. The paucity however of them, even if a longer catalogue could be produced, I think, shews that the ancient sculptors considered the representation of *spirited action* as an achievement. The moderns have been less daring in attempting it. But I believe connoisseurs universally give the preference to those statues, in which the great masters have so successfully exhibited animated action.

Animal

Animal life, as well as human, is, in general, beautiful both in nature, and on canvas. We admire the pampered horse, as a *real object*; the elegance of his form; the stateliness of his tread; the spirit of all his motions; and the glossiness of his coat. We admire him also in *representation*. But as an object of picturesque beauty, we admire more the worn-out cart-horse, the cow, the goat, or the ass; whose harder lines, and rougher coats, exhibit more the graces of the pencil. For the truth of this we may examine Berghem's pictures: we may examine the smart touch of Rosa of Tivoli. The lion with his rough mane; the bristly boar; and the ruffled plumage of the eagle\*, are all objects of this kind.

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\* The idea of the *ruffled plumage of the eagle* is taken from the celebrated eagle of Pindar, in his first Pythian ode; which has exercised the pens of several poets; and is equally poetical, and picturesque. He is introduced as an instance of the power of music. In Gray's ode on the progress of poetry we have the following picture of him.

Perching on the scepter'd hand  
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king  
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:  
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie  
The terror of his beak, and lightening of his eye.

Akenfide's

kind. Smooth-coated animals could not produce so picturesque an effect.

But when the painter thus prefers the cart-horse, the cow, or the ass to other objects *more beautiful in themselves*, he does not certainly recommend his art to those, whose love of beauty makes them anxiously seek, by what means it's fleeting forms may be fixed,

Akenfide's picture of him, in his hymn to the Naiads, is rather a little stiffly painted.

————— With slackened wings,  
While now the solemn concert breathes around,  
Incumbent on the sceptre of his lord  
Sleeps the stern eagle; by the numbered notes  
Possessed; and satiate with the melting tone;  
Sovereign of birds. —————

West's picture, especially the two last lines, is a very good one.

The bird's fierce monarch drops his vengeful ire.  
Perched on the sceptre of th' Olympian king,  
The thrilling power of harmony he feels  
And indolently hangs his flagging wing;  
While gentle sleep his closing eyelid seals,  
And o'er his heaving limbs, in loose array,  
To every balmy gale the rustling feathers play.

Suggestions

Suggestions of this kind are ungrateful. The art of painting allows you all you wish. You desire to have a beautiful object painted—your horse, for instance, led out of the stable in all his pampered beauty. The art of painting is ready to accommodate you. You have the beautiful form you admired in nature exactly transferred to canvas. Be then satisfied. The art of painting has given you what you wanted. It is no injury to the beauty of your Arabian, if the painter think he could have given the graces of his art more forcibly to your cart-horse.

But does it not depreciate his art, if he give up a beautiful form, for one less beautiful, merely because he can give it *the graces of his art more forcibly* — because its sharp lines afford him a greater facility of execution? Is the smart touch of a pencil the grand desideratum of painting? Does he discover nothing in *picturesque objects*, but qualities, which admit of being rendered with spirit?

I should not vindicate him, if he did. At the same time, a free execution is so very fascinating a part of painting, that we need

not wonder, if the artist lay a great stress upon it.—It is not however intirely owing, as some imagine, to the difficulty of mastering an elegant line, that he prefers a rough one. In part indeed this may be the case; for if an elegant line be not delicately hit off, it is the most insipid of all lines: whereas in the description of a rough object, an error in delineation is not easily seen. However this is not the whole of the matter. A free, bold touch is in itself pleasing\*. In elegant figures indeed there must be a delicate outline — at least a line true to nature: yet the surfaces even of such figures may be touched with freedom; and in the appendages of the composition there must be a mixture of rougher objects, or there will be a want of contrast. In landscape universally the rougher objects are admired; which give the freest scope to execution. If the pencil

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\* A stroke may be called *free*, when there is no appearance of constraint. It is *bold*, when a part is given for the whole, which it cannot fail of suggesting. This is the laconism of genius. But sometimes it may be free, and yet suggest only how easily a line, which means nothing, may be executed. Such a stroke is not *bold*, but *impudent*.

be timid, or hesitating, little beauty results. The execution then only is pleasing, when the hand firm, and yet decisive, freely touches the characteristic parts of each object.

If indeed, either in literary, or in picturesque composition you endeavour to draw the reader, or the spectator from the *subject* to the *mode of executing* it, your affectation\* disgusts. At the same time, if some care, and pains be not bestowed on the *execution*, your slovenliness disgusts as much. Tho perhaps the artist has more to say, than the man of letters, for paying attention to his *execution*. A truth is a truth, whether delivered in the language of a philosopher, or of a peasant: and the *intellect* receives it as such. But the artist, who

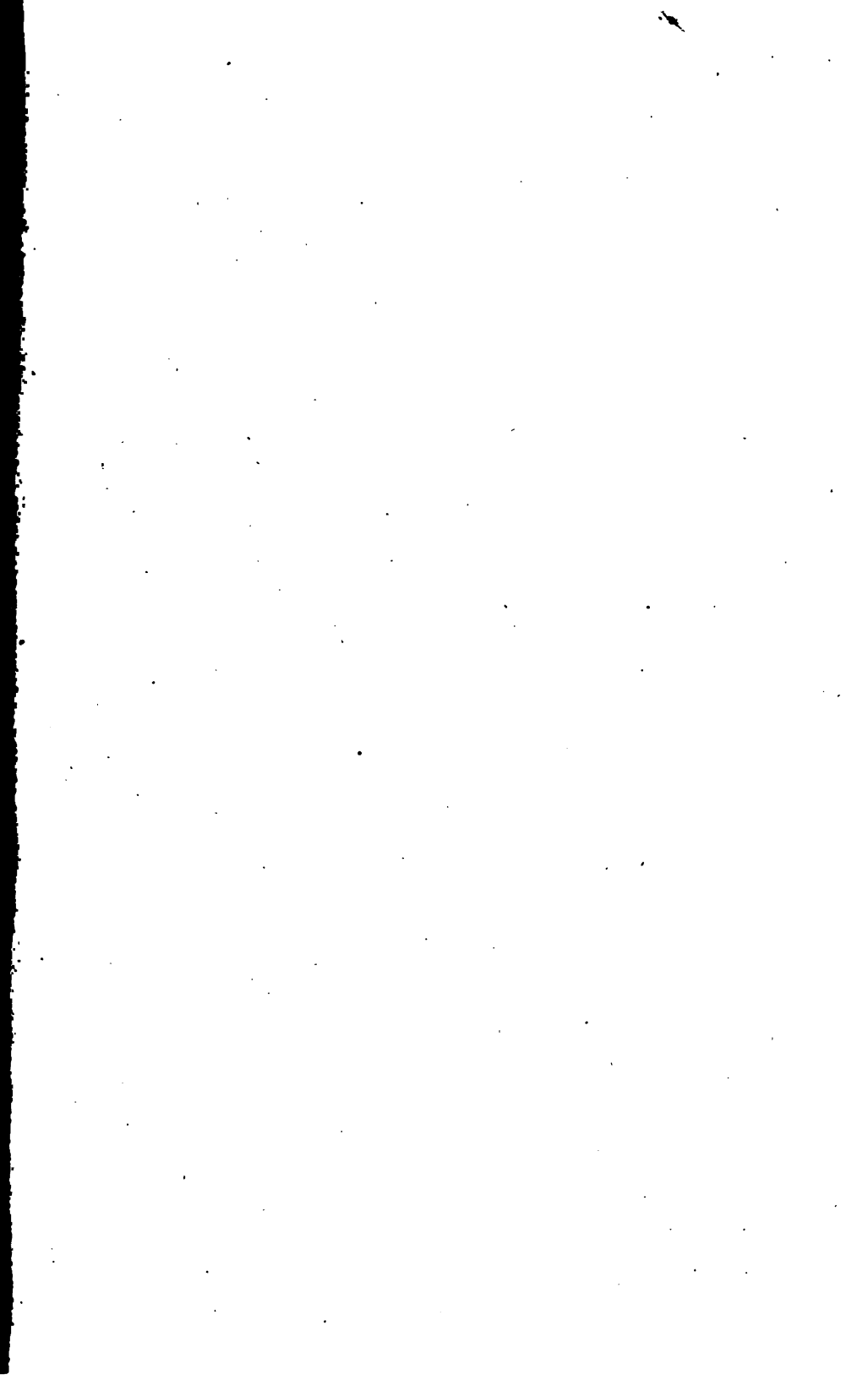
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\* Language, like light, is a medium; and the true philosophic stile, like light from a north-window, exhibits objects clearly, and distinctly, without soliciting attention to itself. In subjects of amusement indeed, language may gild somewhat more, and colour with the dyes of fancy: but where information is of more importance than entertainment, tho you cannot throw too *strong* a light, you should carefully avoid a *coloured* one. The stile of some writers resembles a bright light placed between the eye, and the thing to be looked at. The light shews itself; and hides the object: and, it must be allowed, the execution of some painters is as impertinent, as the stile of such writers.











deals in lines, surfaces, and colours, which are an immediate address to the *eye*, conceives the *very truth itself* concerned in his *mode* of representing it. Guido's angel, and the angel on a sign-post, are very different beings; but the whole of the difference consists in an artful application of lines, surfaces, and colours.

It is not however merely for the sake of his *execution*, that the artist values a rough object. He finds it in many other respects accommodated to his art. In the first place, his *composition* requires it. If the history-painter threw all his draperies smooth over his figures; his groups, and combinations would be very awkward. And in *landscape-painting* smooth objects would produce no composition at all. In a mountain-scene what composition could arise from the corner of a smooth knoll coming forward on one side, intersected by a smooth knoll on the other; with a smooth plain perhaps in the middle, and a smooth mountain in the distance? The very idea is disgusting. Picturesque composition consists in uniting in one whole a variety of parts; and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects. If the smooth moun-

tains, and plains were broken by different objects, the composition would be good, if we suppose the great lines of it were so before.

*Variety* too is equally necessary in his composition: so is *contrast*. Both these he finds in rough objects; and neither of them in smooth. Variety indeed, in some degree, he may find in the outline of a smooth object: but by no means enough to satisfy the eye, without including the surface also.

From *rough* objects also he seeks the *effect of light and shade*, which they are as well disposed to produce, as they are the beauty of composition. One uniform light, or one uniform shade produces no effect. It is the various surfaces of objects, sometimes turning to the light in one way, and sometimes in another, that give the painter his choice of opportunities in massing, and graduating both his lights, and shades. — The *richness* also of the light depends on the breaks, and little recesses, which it finds on the surfaces of bodies. What the painter calls *richness* on a surface, is only a variety of little parts; on which the light shining shews all its small inequalities, and roughnesses; or in the

the painter's language, *inriches* it. — The beauty also of *catching lights* arises from the roughness of objects. What the painter calls a *catching light* is a strong touch of light on some prominent part of a surface, while the rest is in shadow. A smooth surface hath no such prominences.

In *colouring* also, *rough* objects give the painter another advantage. Smooth bodies are commonly as uniform in their colour, as they are in their surface. In glossy objects, tho' smooth, the colouring may sometimes vary. In general however it is otherwise; in the objects of landscape, particularly. The smooth side of a hill is generally of one uniform colour; while the fractured rock presents it's grey surface, adorned with patches of greensward running down it's guttered sides; and the broken ground is every where varied with an okery tint, a grey gravel, or a leaden-coloured clay: so that in fact the rich colours of the ground arise generally from it's broken surface.

From such reasoning then we infer, that it is not merely for the sake of his *execution* that the painter prefers *rough* objects to *smooth*. The very essence of his art requires it.

As picturesque beauty therefore so greatly depends on *rough* objects, are we to exclude every idea of *smoothness* from mixing with it? Are we struck with no pleasing image, when the lake is spread upon the canvas; the *mar-moreum æquor*, pure, limpid, smooth, as the polished mirror?

We acknowledge it to be picturesque: but we must at the same time recollect, that, in fact, the smoothness of the lake is more in *reality*, than in *appearance*. Were it spread upon the canvas in one simple hue, it would certainly be a dull, fatiguing object. But to the eye it appears broken by shades of various kinds; or by reflections from all the rough objects in it's neighbourhood.

It is thus too in other glossy bodies. Tho the horse, in a *rough* state as we have just observed, or worn down with labour, is more adapted to the pencil, than when his sides shine with brushing, and high-feeding; yet in this latter state also he is certainly a picturesque object. But it is not his smooth, and shining coat, that makes him so. It is the apparent interruption of that smoothness by a variety of shades, and colours, which produces the effect. Such a play of muscles appears  
every

every where, through the fineness of his skin, gently swelling, and sinking into each other — he is all over so *lubricus aspici*, the reflections of light are so continually shifting upon him, and playing into each other, that the eye never considers the smoothness of the surface; but is amused with gliding up, and down, among those endless transitions, which in some degree, supply the room of *roughness*.

It is thus too in the plumage of birds. Nothing can be softer, nothing smoother to the touch; and yet it is certainly picturesque. But it is not the smoothness of the surface, which produces the effect — it is not this we admire: it is the breaking of the colours: it is the bright green, or purple, changing perhaps into a rich azure, or velvet black; from thence taking a semi-tint; and so on through all the varieties of colour. Or if the colours be not changeable, it is the harmony of them, which we admire in these elegant little touches of nature's pencil. The smoothness of the surface is only the ground of the colours. In itself we admire it no more, than we do the smoothness of the canvas, which receives the colours of the picture. Even the plumage of the swan, which to the inaccurate observer ap-

pears only of one simple hue, is in fact varied with a thousand soft shadows, and brilliant touches, at once discoverable to the picturesque eye.

Thus too a piece of polished marble may be picturesque : but it is only, when the polish brings out beautiful veins, which in *appearance* break the surface by a variety of lines, and colours. Let the marble be perfectly white, and the effect vanishes. Thus also a mirror may have picturesque beauty ; but it is only from it's reflections. In an unreflecting state, it is insipid.

In statuary we sometimes see an inferior artist give his marble a gloss, thinking to atone for his bad workmanship by his excellent polish. The effect shews in how small a degree smoothness enters into the idea of the picturesque. When the light plays on the shining coat of a pampered horse, it plays among the lines, and muscles of nature ; and is therefore founded in truth. But the polish of marble-flesh is unnatural\*. The lights  
therefore

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\* On all human flesh held between the eye and the light, there is a degree of polish. I speak not here of such a polish



therefore are false; and smoothness being here one of the chief qualities to admire, we are disgusted; and say, it makes bad, worse.

After all, we mean not to assert, that even a simple smooth surface is in no situation picturesque. In *contrast* it certainly may be: nay in contrast it is often necessary. The beauty of an old head is greatly improved by the smoothness of the bald pate; and the rougher parts of the rock must necessarily be set off with the smoother. But the point lies here: to make an object in a peculiar manner picturesque, there *must be* a proportion of *roughness*; so much at least, as to make an opposition; which, in an object simply beautiful, is unnecessary.

Some quibbling opponent may throw out, that wherever there is smoothness, there must also be roughness. The smoothest plain consists of many rougher parts; and the roughest rock of many smoother; and there is such a variety of degrees in both, that it is hard to

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as this, which wrought-marble always, in a degree, possesses, as well as human flesh; but of the highest polish, which can be given to marble; and which has always a very bad effect. If I wanted an example, the bust of arch-bishop Boulter in Westminster-abbey would afford a very glaring one.

say,

say, where you have the precise ideas of *rough* and *smooth*.

To this it is enough, that the province of the picturesque eye is to *survey nature*; not to *anatomize matter*. It throws it's glances around in the broad-cast file. It comprehends an extensive tract at each sweep. It examines *parts*, but never descends to *particles*.

Having thus from a variety of examples endeavoured to shew, that *roughness* either *real*, or *apparent*, forms an essential difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*; it may be expected, that we should point out the reason of this difference. It is obvious enough, why the painter, prefers *rough* objects to *smooth*\*: but it is not so obvious, why the quality of *roughness* should make an *essential difference* between objects of *beauty*, and objects suited to *artificial representation*.

To this question, we might answer, that the picturesque eye abhors art; and delights solely in nature: and that as art abounds with *regularity*, which is only another name

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\* See page 19, &c.

for *smoothness* ; and the images of nature with *irregularity*, which is only another name for *roughness*, we have here a solution of our question.

But is this solution satisfactory? I fear not. Tho art often abounds with regularity, it does not follow, that all art must necessarily do so. The picturesque eye, it is true, finds its *chief* object in nature ; but it delights also in the images of art, if they are marked with the characteristics, which it requires. *A painter's nature* is whatever he *imitates* ; whether the object be what is commonly called natural, or artificial. Is there a greater ornament of landscape, than the ruins of a castle? What painter rejects it, because it is artificial? — What beautiful effects does Vandervelt produce from shipping? In the hands of such a master it furnishes almost as beautiful forms, as any in the whole circle of picturesque objects? — And what could the history-painter do, without his draperies to combine, contrast, and harmonize his figures? Uncloathed, they could never be grouped. How could he tell his story, without arms ; religious utensils ; and the rich furniture of banquets? Many of these contribute

tribute greatly to embellish his pictures with pleasing shapes.

Shall we then seek the solution of our question in the great foundation of picturesque beauty? in the *happy union of simplicity and variety*; to which the *rough* ideas essentially contribute? An extended plain is a simple object. It is the continuation of only one uniform idea. But the mere *simplicity* of a plain produces no beauty. Break the surface of it, as you did your pleasure-ground; add trees, rocks, and declivities; that is, give it *roughness*, and you give it also *variety*. Thus by enriching the *parts* of a united *whole* with *roughness*, you obtain the combined idea of *simplicity*, and *variety*; from whence results the picturesque. — Is this a satisfactory answer to our question?

By no means. *Simplicity and variety* are sources of the *beautiful*, as well as of the *picturesque*. Why does the architect break the front of his pile with ornaments? Is it not to add variety to simplicity? Even the very black-smith acknowledges this principle by forming ringlets and bulbous circles on his tongs, and pokers. In nature it is the same; and your plain will just as much  
be

be improved *in reality* by breaking it, as *upon canvas*. — in a garden-scene the idea is different. There every object is of the neat, and elegant kind. What is otherwise, is in-harmonious ; and *roughness* would be disorder.

Shall we then change our ground ; and seek an answer to our question in the nature of the art of painting ? As it is an art *strictly imitative*, those objects will of course appear most advantageously to the picturesque eye, which are the most easily imitated. The stronger the features are, the stronger will be the effect of imitation ; and as rough objects have the strongest features, they will consequently, when represented, appear to most advantage. — Is this answer more satisfactory ?

Very little, in truth. Every painter, knows that a smooth object may be as easily, and as well imitated, as a rough one.

Shall we then take an opposite ground, and say just the reverse (as men pressed with difficulties will say any thing) that painting is *not* an art *strictly imitative*, but rather *deceptive* — that by an assemblage of colours, and a peculiar art in spreading them, the painter gives a semblance of nature at a proper distance ; which at hand, is quite another thing — that

— that those objects, which we call picturesque, are only such as are more adapted to this art — and that as this art is most concealed in rough touches, rough objects are of course the most picturesque. — Have we now attained a satisfactory account of the matter ?

Just as much so, as before. Many painters of note did not use the rough stile of painting ; and yet their pictures are as admirable, as the pictures of those, who did : nor are rough objects less picturesque on their canvas, than on the canvas of others : that is, they paint rough objects smoothly.

Thus foiled, should we in the true spirit of inquiry, persist ; or honestly give up the cause, and own we cannot search out the source of this difference ? I am afraid this is the truth, whatever airs of dogmatizing we may assume, inquiries into *principles* rarely end in satisfaction. Could we even gain satisfaction in our present question, new doubts would arise. The very first principles of our art would be questioned. Difficulties would start up *vestibulum ante ipsum*. We should be asked, What is beauty ? What is taste ? — Let us step aside a moment, and listen to the debates of the learned on these heads. They will at least shew

shew us, that however we may wish to fix *principles*, our inquiries are seldom satisfactory.

One philosopher will tell us, that taste is only the improvement of our own ideas. Every man has naturally his proportion of taste. The seeds of it are innate. All depends on cultivation.

Another philosopher following the analogy of nature, observes, that as all men's faces are different, we may well suppose their minds to be so likewise. He rejects the idea therefore of innate taste; and in the room of this makes *utility* the standard both of taste, and beauty.

A third philosopher thinks the idea of *utility* as absurd, as the last did that of *innate taste*. What, cries he, can I not admire the beauty of a resplendent sun-set, till I have investigated the *utility* of that peculiar radiance in the atmosphere? He then wishes we had a little less philosophy among us, and a little more common sense. *Common sense* is despised like other common things: but, in his opinion, if we made *common sense* the criterion in matters of art, as well as science, we should be nearer the truth.

A fourth

A fourth philosopher apprehends *common sense* to be our standard only in the ordinary affairs of life. The bounty of nature has furnished us with various other senses suited to the objects, among which we converse: and with regard to matters of taste, it has supplied us with what, he doubts not, we all feel within ourselves, *a sense of beauty*.

Pooh! says another learned inquirer, what is a *sense of beauty*? *Sense* is a vague idea, and so is *beauty*; and it is impossible that any thing determined can result from terms so inaccurate. But if we lay aside a *sense of beauty*, and adopt *proportion*, we shall all be right. *Proportion* is the great principle of taste, and beauty. We admit it both in lines, and colours; and indeed refer all our ideas of the elegant kind to it's standard.

True, says an admirer of the antique; but this proportion must have a rule, or we gain nothing: and a *rule of proportion* there certainly is: but we may inquire after it in vain. The secret is lost. The ancients had it. They well knew the principles of beauty; and had that unerring rule, which in all things adjusted their taste. We see it even in their slightest vases. In *their* works, proportion, tho varied  
 4 through



through a thousand lines, is still the same; and if we could only discover their *principles of proportion*, we should have the arcanum of this science; and might settle all our disputes about taste with great ease.

Thus, in our inquiries into *first principles* we go on, without end, and without satisfaction. The human understanding is unequal to the search. In philosophy we inquire for them in vain—in physics—in metaphysics—in morals. Even in the polite arts, where the subject, one should imagine, is less recondite, the inquiry, we find, is equally vague. We are puzzled, and bewildered, but not informed: all is uncertainty; a strife of words; the old contest,

Empedocles, an Stertini deliret acumen?

In a word, if *a cause be sufficiently understood*, it may suggest useful discoveries. But if it be *not so* (and where is our certainty in these disquisitions) it will unquestionably *mislead*.

END OF THE FIRST ESSAY.

As the subject of the foregoing essay is rather new, and I doubted, whether sufficiently founded in truth, I was desirous, before I printed it, that it should receive the *imprimatur* of sir Joshua Reynolds. I begged him therefore to look it over, and received the following answer.

London,  
April 19, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

Tho I read now but little, yet I have read with great attention the essay, which you was so good to put into my hands, on the difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*; and I may truly say, I have received from it much pleasure, and improvement.

Without opposing any of your sentiments, it has suggested an idea, that may be worth consideration — whether the epithet *picturesque* is not applicable to the excellences of the inferior schools, rather than to the higher.

The

The works of Michael Angelo, Raphael, &c. appear to me to have nothing of it; whereas Reubens, and the Venetian painters may almost be said to have nothing else.

Perhaps *picturesque* is somewhat synonymous to the word *taste*; which we should think improperly applied to Homer, or Milton, but very well to Pope, or Prior. I suspect that the application of these words are to excellences of an inferior order; and which are incompatible with the grand style.

You are certainly right in saying, that variety of tints and forms is picturesque; but it must be remembered, on the other hand, that the reverse of this — (uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of lines,) produces grandeur.

I had an intention of pointing out the passages, that particularly struck me; but I was afraid to use my eyes so much.

The essay has lain upon my table; and I think no day has passed without my looking at it, reading a little at a time. Whatever objections presented themselves at first view\*,

were

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\* Sir Joshua Reynolds had seen this essay, several years ago, through Mr. Mason, who shewed it to him. He then made

were done away on a cloſer inſpection: and I am not quite ſure, but that is the caſe in regard to the obſervation, which I have ventured to make on the word *pictureſque*.

I am, &c.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

To the rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Gilpin,  
Vicar's-hill.

### THE ANSWER.

May 2d, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for looking over my eſſay at a time, when the complaint in your eyes muſt have made an intrusion of this kind troubleſome. But as the ſubject was rather novel, I wiſhed much for your ſanction; and you have given it me in as flattering a manner, as I could wiſh.

With regard to the term *pictureſque*, I have always myſelf uſed it merely to denote *ſuch objects, as are proper ſubjects for painting*:

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ſome objections to it: particularly he thought, that the term *pictureſque*, ſhould be applied only to the *works of nature*. His conceſſion here is an inſtance of that candour, which is a very remarkable part of his character; and which is generally one of the diſtinguiſhing marks of true genius.

so that, according to *my definition*, one of the cartoons, and a flower piece are equally picturesque.

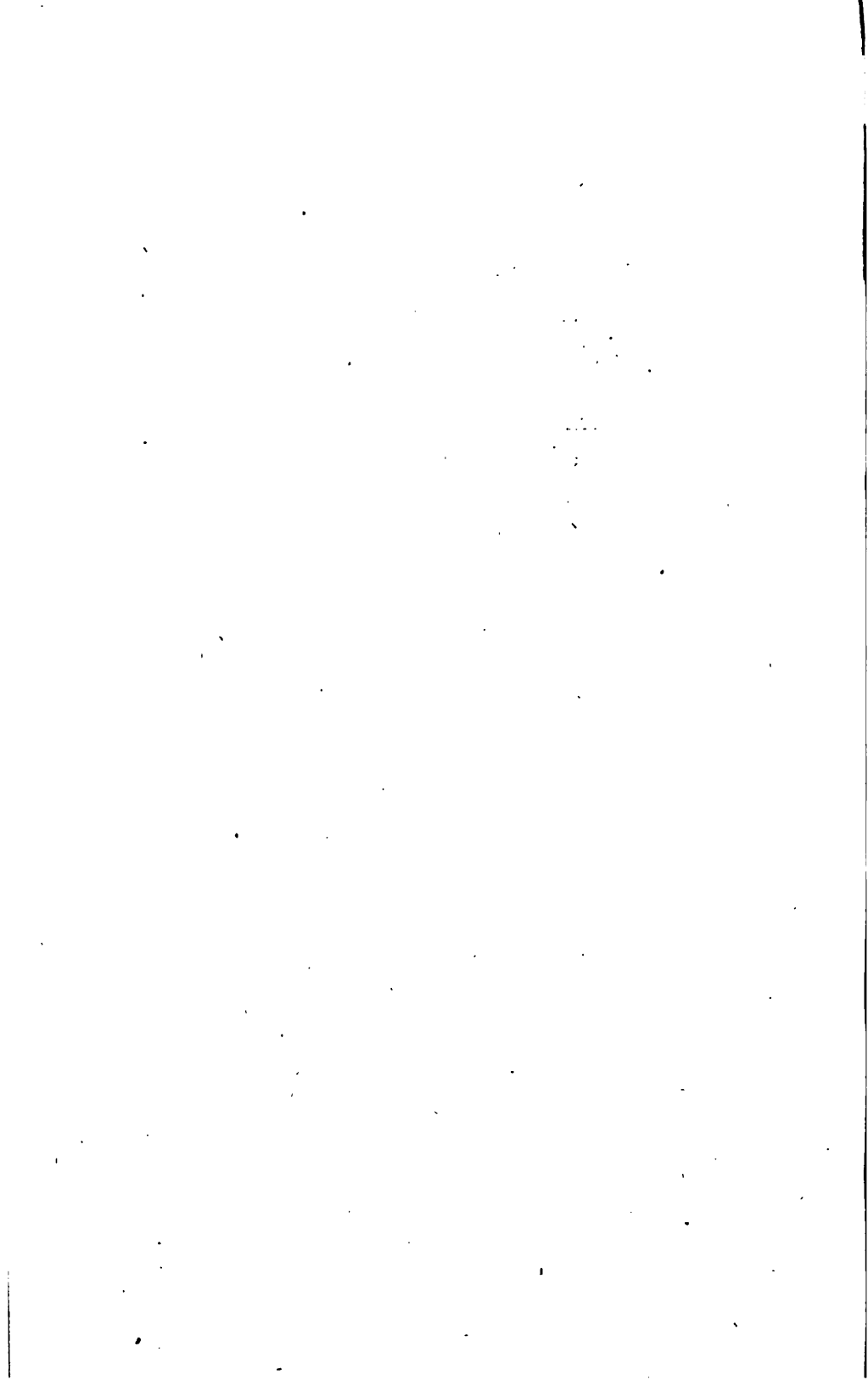
I think however I understand your idea of extending the term to what may be called *taste in painting* — or the art of fascinating the eye by splendid colouring, and artificial combinations; which the inferior schools valued; and the dignity of the higher perhaps despised. But I have seen so little of the higher schools, that I should be very ill able to carry the subject farther by illustrating a disquisition of this kind. Except the cartoons, I never saw a picture of Raphael's, that answered my idea; and of the original works of Michael Angelo I have little conception.

But tho I am unable, through ignorance, to appreciate fully the grandeur of the Roman school, I have at least the pleasure to find I have always held as a principle your idea of the production of greatness by *uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of line*: and when I speak of *variety*, I certainly do not mean to confound it's effects with those of *grandeur*.

I am, &c.

WILLIAM GILPIN.

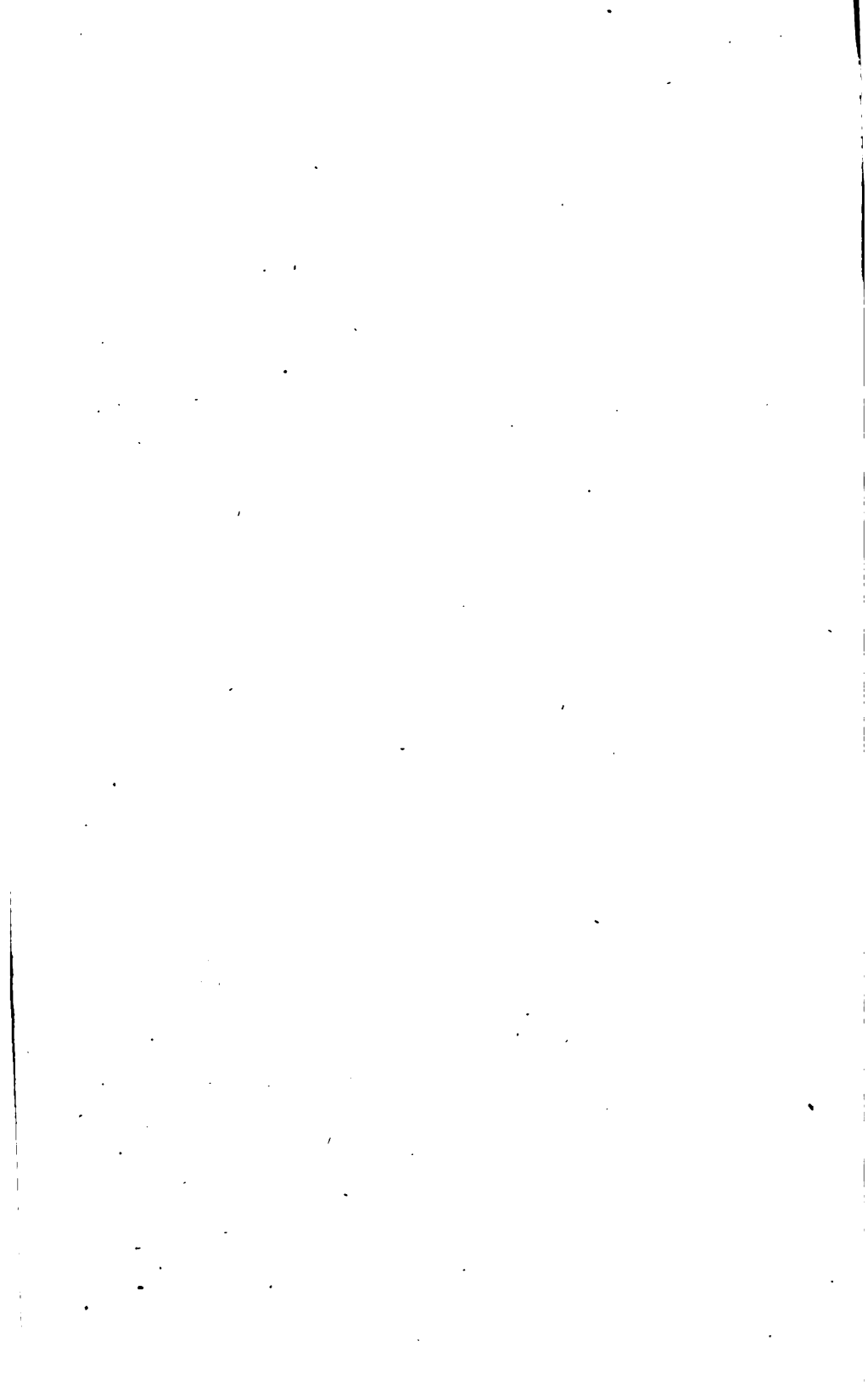
To Sir Joshua Reynolds,  
Leicester-square.



# **ESSAY II.**

**ON**

**PICTURESQUE TRAVEL.**





## ESSAY II.

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ENOUGH has been said to shew the difficulty of *assigning causes*: let us then take another course, and amuse ourselves with *searching after effects*. This is the general intention of picturesque travel. We mean not to bring it into competition with any of the more useful ends of travelling. But as many travel without any end at all, amusing themselves without being able to give a reason why they are amused, we offer one end, which may possibly engage some vacant minds; and may indeed afford a rational amusement to such as travel for more important purposes.

In treating of picturesque travel, we may consider first it's *object*; and secondly its sources of *amusement*.

It's

It's *object* is beauty of every kind, which either art, or nature can produce: but it is chiefly that species of *beauty*, which we have endeavoured to characterize in the preceding essay under the name of *picturesque*. This great object we pursue through the scenery of nature. We seek it among all the ingredients of landscape — trees — rocks — broken-grounds — woods — rivers — lakes — plains — vallies — mountains — and distances. These objects *in themselves* produce infinite variety. No two rocks, or trees are exactly the same. They are varied, a second time, by *combination*; and almost as much, a third time, by different *lights*, and *shades*, and other aerial effects. Sometimes we find among them the exhibition of a *whole*; but oftener we find only beautiful *parts*\*.

That we may examine picturesque objects with more ease, it may be useful to class them into the *sublime*, and the *beautiful*; tho, in fact, this distinction is rather inaccurate.

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\* As some of these topics have been occasionally mentioned in other picturesque works, which the author has given the public, they are here touched very slightly: only the subject required they should be brought together.

*Sublimity alone* cannot make an object *picturesque*. However grand the mountain, or the rock may be, it has no claim to this epithet, unless its form, its colour, or its accompaniments have *some degree of beauty*. Nothing can be more sublime, than the ocean : but wholly unaccompanied, it has little of the picturesque. When we talk therefore of a sublime object, we always understand, that it is also beautiful : and we call it sublime, or beautiful, only as the ideas of sublimity, or of simple beauty prevail.

The *curious*, and *fantastic* forms of nature are by no means the favourite objects of the lovers of landscape. There may be beauty in a *curious* object ; and so far it may be picturesque : but we cannot admire it merely for the sake of its curiosity. The *lusus naturæ* is the naturalist's province, not the painter's. The spiry pinnacles of the mountain, and the castle-like arrangement of the rock, give no peculiar pleasure to the picturesque eye. It is fond of the simplicity of nature ; and sees most beauty in her *most usual* forms. The *Giant's causeway* in Ireland may strike it as a novelty ; but the lake of Killarney attracts its attention. It would range with supreme  
delight

delight among the sweet vales of Switzerland; but would view only with a transient glance, the Glaciers of Savoy. Scenes of this kind, as unusual, may please *once*; but the great works of nature, in her simplest and purest stile, open inexhausted springs of amusement.

But it is not only the *form*, and the *composition* of the objects of landscape, which the picturesque eye examines; it connects them with the atmosphere, and seeks for all those various effects, which are produced from that vast, and wonderful storehouse of nature. Nor is there in travelling a greater pleasure, than when a scene of grandeur bursts unexpectedly upon the eye, accompanied with some accidental circumstance of the atmosphere, which harmonizes with it, and gives it double value.

Besides the *inanimate* face of nature, it's *living forms* fall under the picturesque eye, in the course of travel; and are often objects of great attention. The anatomical study of figures is not attended to: we regard them merely as the ornament of scenes. In the human figure we contemplate neither *exactness of form*, nor *expression*, any farther than it is shewn in *action*: we merely consider general shapes, dresses, groups, and occupations; which  
we

we often find *casually* in greater variety, and beauty, than any selection can procure.

In the same manner animals are the objects of our attention, whether we find them in the park, the forest, or the field. Here too we consider little more than their general forms, actions, and combinations. Nor is the picturesque eye so fastidious as to despise even less considerable objects. A flight of birds has often a pleasing effect. In short, every form of life and being may have it's use as a picturesque object, till it become too small for attention.

But the picturesque eye is not merely restricted to nature. It ranges through the limits of art. The picture, the statue, and the garden are all the objects of it's attention. In the embellished pleasure-ground particularly, tho all is neat, and elegant—far too neat and elegant for the use of the pencil—yet, if it be well laid out, it exhibits the *lines*, and *principles* of landscape; and is well worth the study of the picturesque traveller. Nothing is wanting, but what his imagination can supply—a change from smooth to rough\*.

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\* See page 8.

But among all the objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of castles, and abbeys. These are the richest legacies of art. They are consecrated by time; and almost deserve the veneration we pay to the works of nature itself.

Thus universal are the objects of picturesque travel. We pursue *beauty* in every shape; through nature, through art; and all its various arrangements in form, and colour; admiring it in the grandest objects, and not rejecting it in the humblest.

After the *objects* of picturesque travel, we consider its *sources of amusement*—or in what way the mind is gratified by these objects.

We might begin in moral stile; and consider the objects of nature in a higher light, than merely as amusement. We might observe, that a search after beauty should naturally lead the mind to the great origin of all beauty; to the

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first good, first perfect, and first fair.

But

But tho in theory this seems a natural climax, we insist the less upon it, as in fact we have scarce ground to hope, that every admirer of *picturesque beauty*, is an admirer also of the *beauty of virtue*; and that every lover of nature reflects, that

Nature is but a name for an *effect*,  
Whose *cause* is God. \_\_\_\_\_

If however the admirer of nature can turn his amusements to a higher purpose; if it's great scenes can inspire him with religious awe; or it's tranquil scenes with that complacency of mind, which is so nearly allied to benevolence, it is certainly the better. *Apponatus lucro*. It is so much into the bargain; for we dare not *promise* him more from picturesque travel, than a rational, and agreeable amusement. Yet even this may be of some use in an age teeming with licentious pleasure; and may in this light at least be considered as having a moral tendency.

The first source of amusement to the picturesque traveller, is the *pursuit* of his object—the expectation of new scenes continually opening, and arising to his view. We suppose the country to have been unexplored. Under this circumstance the mind is kept constantly in an agreeable

agreeable suspense. The love of novelty is the foundation of this pleasure. Every distant horizon promises something new; and with this pleasing expectation we follow nature through all her walks. We pursue her from hill to dale; and hunt after those various beauties, with which she every where abounds.

The pleasures of the chase are universal. A hare started before dogs is enough to set a whole country in an uproar. The plough, and the spade are deserted. Care is left behind; and every human faculty is dilated with joy.—And shall we suppose it a greater pleasure to the sportsman to pursue a trivial animal, than it is to the man of taste to pursue the beauties of nature? to follow her through all her recesses? to obtain a sudden glance, as she flits past him in some airy shape? to trace her through the mazes of the cover? to wind after her along the vale? or along the reaches of the river.

After the pursuit we are gratified with the *attainment* of the object. Our amusement, on this head, arises from the employment of the mind in examining the beautiful scenes we have found. Sometimes we examine them under the idea of a *whole*: we admire the composition,



position, the colouring, and the light, in one *comprehensive view*. When we are fortunate enough to fall in with scenes of this kind, we are highly delighted. But as we have less frequent opportunities of being thus gratified, we are more commonly employed in analyzing the *parts of scenes*: which may be exquisitely beautiful, tho unable to produce a whole. We examine what would amend the composition: how little is wanting to reduce it to the rules of our art; how trifling a circumstance sometimes forms the limit between beauty, and deformity. Or we compare the objects before us with other objects of the same kind: — or perhaps we compare them with the imitations of art. From all these operations of the mind results great amusement.

But it is not from this *scientific* employment, that we derive our chief pleasure. We are most delighted, when some grand scene, tho perhaps of incorrect composition, rising before the eye, strikes us beyond the power of thought — when the *vox faucibus hæret*; and every mental operation is suspended. In this pause of intellect; this *deliquium* of the soul, an enthusiastic sensation of pleasure overspreads

it, previous to any examination by the rules of art. The general idea of the scene makes an impression, before any appeal is made to the judgment. We rather *feel*, than *survey* it.

This high delight is generally indeed produced by the scenes of nature; yet sometimes by artificial objects. Here and there a capital picture will raise these emotions: but oftener the rough sketch of a capital master. This has sometimes an astonishing effect on the mind; giving the imagination an opening into all those glowing ideas, which inspired the artist; and which the imagination *only* can translate. In general however the works of art affect us coolly; and allow the eye to criticize at leisure.

Having gained by a minute examination of incidents a compleat idea of an object, our next amusement arises from enlarging, and correcting our general stock of ideas. The variety of nature is such, that *new objects*, and new combinations of them, are continually adding something to our fund, and enlarging our collection: while the *same kind of object* occurring frequently, is seen under various shapes; and makes us, if I may so speak, more learned in nature. We get it more by heart.

He

He who has seen only one oak-tree, has no compleat idea of an oak in general: but he who has examined thousands of oak-trees, must have seen that beautiful plant in all it's varieties; and obtains a full, and compleat idea of it.

From this correct knowledge of objects arises another amusement; that of representing, by a few strokes in a sketch, those ideas, which have made the most impression upon us. A few scratches, like a short-hand scrawl of our own, legible at least to ourselves, will serve to raise in our minds the remembrance of the beauties they humbly represent; and recal to our memory even the splendid colouring, and force of light, which existed in the real scene. Some naturalists suppose, the act of ruminating, in animals, to be attended with more pleasure, than the act of grosser mastication. It may be so in travelling also. There may be more pleasure in recollecting, and recording, from a few transient lines, the scenes we have admired, than in the present enjoyment of them. If the scenes indeed have *peculiar greatness*, this secondary pleasure cannot be attended with those enthusiastic feelings, which accompanied the real exhibition. But, in general,

general, tho it may be a calmer species of pleasure, it is more uniform, and uninterrupted. It flatters us too with the idea of a sort of creation of our own; and it is unallayed with that fatigue, which is often a considerable abatement to the pleasures of traversing the wild, and savage parts of nature. — After we have amused *ourselves* with our sketches, if we can, in any degree, contribute to the amusement of others also, the pleasure is surely so much enhanced.

There is still another amusement arising from the correct knowledge of objects; and that is the power of creating, and representing *scenes of fancy*; which is still more a work of creation, than copying from nature. The imagination becomes a camera obscura, only with this difference, that the camera represents objects as they really are: while the imagination, impressed with the most beautiful scenes, and chastened by rules of art, forms it's pictures, not only from the most admirable parts of nature; but in the best taste.

Some artists, when they give their imagination play, let it loose among uncommon scenes — such as perhaps never existed: whereas the nearer they approach the simple standard  
of

of nature, in it's most beautiful forms, the more admirable their fictions will appear. It is thus in writing romances. The correct taste cannot bear those unnatural situations, in which heroes, and heroines are often placed : whereas a story, *naturally*, and of course *affectingly* told, either with a pen, or a pencil, tho known to be a fiction, is considered as a transcript from nature ; and takes possession of the heart. The *marvellous* disgusts the sober imagination ; which is gratified only with the pure characters of nature.

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Beauty best is taught  
 By those, the favoured few, whom heaven has lent  
 The power to seize, select, and reunite  
 Her loveliest features ; and of these to form  
 One archetype compleat, of sovereign grace.  
 Here nature sees her fairest forms more fair ;  
 Owns them as hers, yet owns herself excelled  
 By what herself produced. —————

But if we are unable to embody our ideas even in a humble sketch, yet still a strong *impression of nature* will enable us to judge of the *works of art*. Nature is the archetype. The stronger therefore the impression, the better the judgment.

We are, in some degree, also amused by the very visions of fancy itself. Often, when slumber has half-closed the eye, and shut out all the objects of sense, especially after the enjoyment of some splendid scene; the imagination, active, and alert, collects it's scattered ideas, transposes, combines, and shifts them into a thousand forms, producing such exquisite scenes, such sublime arrangements, such glow, and harmony of colouring, such brilliant lights, such depth, and clearness of shadow, as equally foil description, and every attempt of artificial colouring.

It may perhaps be objected to the pleasurable circumstances, which are thus said to attend picturesque travel, that we meet as many disgusting, as pleasing objects; and the man of taste therefore will be as often offended, as amused.

But this is not the case. There are few parts of nature, which do not yield a picturesque eye some amusement.

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Believe the muse,  
 She does not know that un auspicious spot,  
 Where beauty is thus niggard of her store.

Believe

Believe the muse, through this terrestrial waste  
 The seeds of grace are sown, profusely sown,  
 Even where we least may hope. —————

It is true, when some large tract of barren country *interrupts* our expectation, wound up in quest of any particular scene of grandeur, or beauty, we are apt to be a little peevish; and to express our discontent in hasty exaggerated phrase. But when there is no disappointment in the case, even scenes the most barren of beauty, will furnish amusement.

Perhaps no part of England comes more under this description, than that tract of barren country, through which the great military road passes from Newcastle to Carlisle. It is a waste, with little interruption, through a space of forty miles. But even here, we have always something to amuse the eye. The interchangeable patches of heath, and green-sward make an agreeable variety. Often too on these vast tracts of intersecting grounds we see beautiful lights, softening off along the sides of hills: and often we see them adorned with cattle, flocks of sheep, heath-cocks, grouse, plover, and flights of other wild-fowl. A group of cattle, standing in  
 E 4 the

the shade on the edge of a dark hill, and relieved by a lighter distance beyond them, will often make a complete picture without any other accompaniment. In many other situations also we find them wonderfully pleasing; and capable of making pictures amidst all the deficiencies of landscape. Even a winding road itself is an object of beauty; while the richness of the heath on each side, with the little hillocks, and crumbling earth give many an excellent lesson for a foreground. When we have no opportunity of examining the *grand scenery* of nature, we have every where at least the means of observing with what a *multiplicity of parts*, and yet with what *general simplicity*, she covers every surface.

But if we let the *imagination* loose, even scenes like these, administer great amusement. The imagination can plant hills; can form rivers, and lakes in vallies; can build castles, and abbeys; and if it find no other amusement, can dilate itself in vast ideas of space.

But altho the picturesque traveller is seldom disappointed with *pure nature*, however rude,  
yet



yet we cannot deny, but he is often offended with the productions of art. He is disgusted with the formal separations of property — with houses, and towns, the haunts of men, which have much oftener a bad effect in landscape, than a good one. He is frequently disgusted also, when art aims more at beauty, than she ought. How flat, and insipid is often the garden-scene; how puerile, and absurd! the banks of the river how smooth, and parallel? the lawn, and it's boundaries, how unlike nature! Even in the capital collection of pictures, how seldom does he find *design, composition, expression, character, or harmony* either in *light, or colouring!* and how often does he drag through saloons, and rooms of state, only to hear a catalogue of the names of masters!

The more refined our taste grows from the *study of nature*, the more insipid are the *works of art*. Few of it's efforts please. The idea of the great original is so strong, that the copy must be pure, if it do not disgust. But the varieties of nature's charts are such, that, study them as we can, new varieties will always arise: and let our taste be ever so refined, her works, on which it is

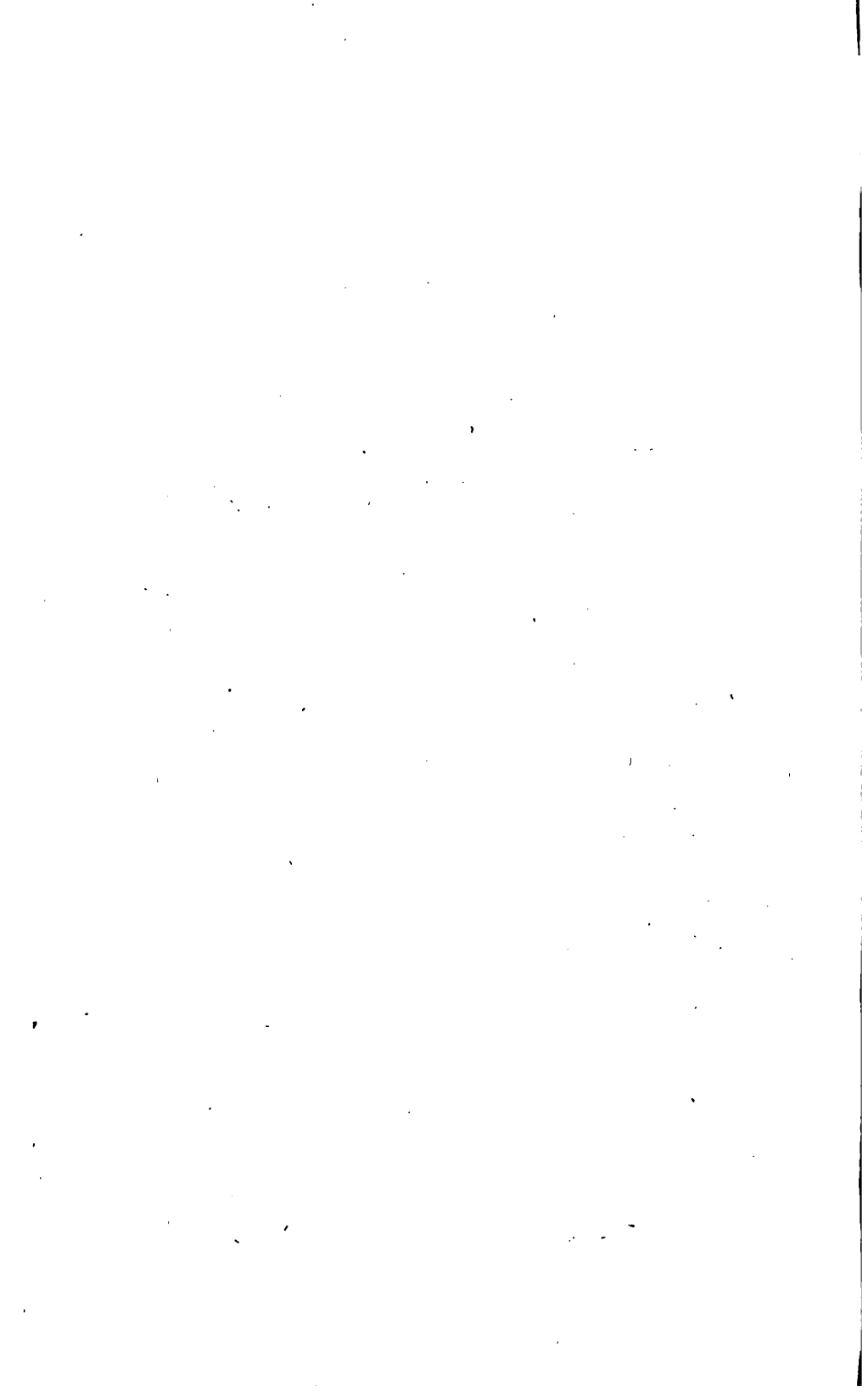
formed, at least when we consider them as *objects*, must always go beyond it; and furnish fresh sources both of pleasure and amusement.

END OF THE SECOND ESSAY.

**E S S A Y   I I I .**

**ON**

**THE ART OF SKETCHING  
LANDSCAPE.**



## ESSAY III.

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THE *art of sketching* is to the picturesque traveller, what the art of writing is to the scholar. Each is equally necessary to *fix* and *communicate* it's respective ideas.

Sketches *are* either taken from the *imagination*, or from *nature*. — When the *imaginary sketch* proceeds from the hands of a master, it is very valuable. It is his first conception : which is commonly the strongest, and the most brilliant. The imagination of a painter, really great in his profession, is a magazine abounding with all the elegant forms, and striking effects, which are to be found in nature. These, like a magician, he calls up at pleasure with a wave of his hand ; bringing before the eye, sometimes a scene from history, or romance ;

mance; and sometimes from the inanimate parts of nature. And in these happy moments when the enthusiasm of his art is upon him, he often produces from the glow of his imagination, with a few bold strokes, such wonderful effusions of genius, as the more sober, and correct productions of his pencil cannot equal.

It will always however be understood, that such sketches must be *examined* also by an eye *learned in the art*, and accustomed to picturesque ideas — an eye, that can take up the half-formed images, as the master leaves them; give them a new creation; and make up all that is not expressed from it's own store-house. — I shall however dwell no longer on *imaginary sketching*, as it hath but little relation to my present subject. Let me only add, that altho this essay is meant chiefly to assist the picturesque traveller in taking *views from nature*, the method recommended, as far as it relates to *execution*, may equally be applied to *imaginary sketches*.

Your intention in taking *views from nature*, may either be to *fix them in your own memory*  
 — or

—— or to convey, in some degree, your ideas to others.

With regard to the former, when you meet a scene you wish to sketch, your first consideration is to get it in the best point of view. A few paces to the right, or left, make a great difference. The ground, which folds awkwardly here, appears to fold more easily there: and that long black curtain of the castle, which is so unpleasing a circumstance, as you stand on one side, is agreeably broken by a buttress on another.

Having thus fixed your point of view, your next consideration, is, how to reduce it properly within the compass of your paper: for the scale of *nature* being so very different from *your* scale, it is a matter of difficulty, without some experience, to make them coincide. If the landscape before you is extensive, take care you do not include too much: it may perhaps be divided more commodiously into two sketches. —— When you have fixed the portion of it, you mean to take, fix next on two or three principal points, which you may just mark on your paper. This will enable you the more easily to ascertain the relative situation of the several objects.

In

In sketching, black-lead is the first instrument commonly used. Nothing glides so volubly over paper, and executes an idea so quickly. — It has besides, another advantage; it's grey tint corresponds better with a wash, than black, or red chalk, or any other pastile. — It admits also of easy correction.

The virtue of these hasty, black-lead sketches consists in catching readily the *characteristic features* of a scene. Light and shade are not attended to. It is enough if you express *general shapes*; and the relations, which the several interfections of a country bear to each other. A few lines drawn on the spot, will do this. “ Half a word, says Mr. Gray, fixed on, or near the spot, is worth all our recollected ideas. When we trust to the picture, that objects draw of themselves on the mind, we deceive ourselves. Without accurate, and particular observation, it is but ill-drawn at first: the outlines are soon blurred: the colours every day grow fainter; and at last, when we would produce it to any body, we are obliged to supply it's defects  
with



with a few strokes of our own imagination\*.”—  
 What Mr. Gray says relates chiefly to *verbal* description: but in *lineal* description it is equally true. The leading ideas must be fixed on the spot: if left to the memory, they soon evaporate.

The lines of black-lead, and indeed of any *one* instrument, are subject to the great inconvenience of *confounding distances*. If there are two, or three distances in the landscape, as each of them is expressed by the *same kind* of line, the eye forgets the distinction, even in half a day's travelling; and all is confusion. To remedy this, a few written references, made on the spot, are necessary, if the landscape be at all complicated. The traveller should be accurate in this point, as the spirit of his view depends much on the proper observance of distances.—— At his first leisure however he will review his sketch: add a few strokes with a pen, to mark the near grounds; and by a slight wash of Indian ink, throw in a few general lights, and shades, to keep all fixed, and in it's place.—— A sketch

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\* Letter to Mr. Palgrave, page 272, 4to.

truth must be taken with caution: tho at the same time a distinction may be made between an *object*, and a *scene*. If I give the striking features of the *castle*, or *abbey*, which is my *object*, I may be allowed some little liberty in bringing appendages (which are not essential features) within the rules of my art. But in a *scene*, the whole view becomes the portrait; and if I flatter here, I must flatter with delicacy.

But whether I represent an *object*, or a *scene*, I hold myself at perfect liberty, in the first place, to dispose the *foreground* as I please; restrained only by the analogy of the country. I take up a tree here, and plant it there. I pare a knoll, or make an addition to it. I remove a piece of paling — a cottage — a wall — or any removeable object, which I dislike. In short, I do not so much mean to exact a liberty of introducing what does not exist; as of making a few of those simple variations, of which all ground is easily susceptible, and which time itself indeed is continually making. All this my art exacts:

She rules the foreground; she can swell, or sink  
 It's surface; here her leafy skreen oppose,  
 And there withdraw; here part the varying greens,

And

And croud them there in one promiscuous gloom,  
As best befits the genius of the scene.

The foreground indeed is a mere spot, compared with the extension of distance: in itself it is of trivial consequence; and cannot well be called a *feature of the scene*. And yet, tho so little essential in *giving a likeness*, it is more so than any other part in *forming a composition*. It resembles those deep tones in music, which give a value to all the lighter parts; and harmonize the whole.

As the foreground therefore is of so much consequence, *begin your adorned sketch* with fixing this very material part. It is easier to ascertain the situation of your foreground, as it lies so near the bottom of your paper, than any other part; and this will tend to regulate every thing else. In your rough sketch it has probably been inaccurately thrown in. You could not so easily ascertain it, till you had gotten all your landscape together. You might have carried it too high on your paper; or have brought it too low. As you have now the general scheme of your landscape before you, you may adjust it properly; and give it it's due proportion. — I shall add only, on the subject of foregrounds,

grounds, that you need not be very nice in finishing them, even when you mean to *adorn* your sketches. In a finished picture the foreground is a matter of great nicety : but in a sketch little more is necessary, than to produce the effect you desire.

Having fixed your foreground, you consider in the same way, tho with more caution, the other parts of your *composition*. In a *hasty transcript* from nature, it is sufficient to take the lines of the country just as you find them : but in your *adorned sketch* you must grace them a little, where they run false. You must contrive to hide offensive parts with wood ; to cover such as are too bald, with bushes ; and to remove little objects, which in nature push themselves too much in sight, and serve only to introduce too many parts into your *composition*. In this happy adjustment the grand merit of your sketch consists. No beauty of light, colouring, or execution can atone for the want of *composition*. It is the foundation of all picturesque beauty. No finery of dress can set off a person, whose figure is awkward and uncouth.

Having thus *digested the composition* of your *adorned sketch*, which is done with black-lead, you

you proceed to give a stronger outline to the foreground, and nearer parts. Some indeed use no outline, but what they freely work with a brush on their black-lead sketch. This comes nearest the idea of painting; and as it is the most free, it is perhaps also the most excellent method: but as a black-lead outline is but a feeble termination, it requires a greater force in the wash to produce an effect; and of course more the hand of a master. The hand of a master indeed produces an effect with the rudest materials: but these precepts aim only at giving a few instructions to the tyroes of the art; and such will perhaps make their outline the most effectually with a pen. As the pen is more determined than black-lead, it leaves less to the brush, which I think the more difficult instrument.—— Indian ink, (which may be heightened, or lowered to any degree of strength, or weakness, so as to touch both the nearer, and more distant grounds,) is the best ink you can use. You may give a stroke with it so light as to confine even a remote distance; tho such a distance is perhaps best left in black-lead.

But when we speak of an *outline*, we do not mean a *simple contour*; which, (however necessary in a correct figure,) would in landscape be formal. It is enough to mark with a few free touches of the pen, here and there, some of the breaks, and roughnesses, in which the richness of an object consists. But you must first determine the situation of your lights, that you may mark these touches on the shadowy side.

Of these free touches with a pen the chief characteristic is *expression*; or the art of giving each object, that peculiar touch, whether smooth, or rough, which best expresses its form. The art of painting, in its highest perfection, cannot give the richness of nature. When we examine any natural form, we find the multiplicity of its parts beyond the highest finishing; and indeed generally an attempt at the highest finishing would end in stiffness. The painter is obliged therefore to deceive the eye by some natural tint, or expressive touch, from which the imagination takes its cue. How often do we see in the landscapes of Claude the full effect of distance; which, when examined closely, consists of a simple dash, tinged with the hue of nature, intermixed

intermixed with a few expressive touches? — If then these expressive touches are necessary where the master carries on the deception both in form and colour; how necessary must they be in mere sketches, in which colour, the great vehicle of deception, is removed? — The art however of giving those expressive marks with a pen, which impress ideas, is no common one. The inferior artist may give them by chance: but the master only gives them with precision. — Yet a sketch may have it's use, and even it's merit, without these strokes of genius.

As the difficulty of using the pen is such, it may perhaps be objected, that it is an improper instrument for a tyro. It loses it's grace, if it have not a ready and off-hand execution.

It is true: but what other instrument shall we put into his hands, that will do better? His black-lead, his brush, whatever he touches, will be unmasterly. But my chief reason for putting a pen into his hands, is, that without a pen it will be difficult for him to preserve his outline, and distances. His touches with a pen may be unmasterly, we allow: but still they will preserve *keeping* in his landscape,  
without

without which the whole will be a blot of confusion. — Nor is it perhaps so difficult to obtain some little freedom with the pen. I have seen assiduity, attended with but little genius, make a considerable progress in the use of this instrument; and produce an effect by no means displeasing. — If the drawing be large, I should recommend a reed-pen, which runs more freely over paper.

When the outline is thus drawn, it remains to add light, and shade. In this operation the effect of a *wash* is much better, than of lines hatched with a pen. A brush will do more in one stroke, and generally more effectually, than a pen can do in twenty\*. For this purpose, we need only

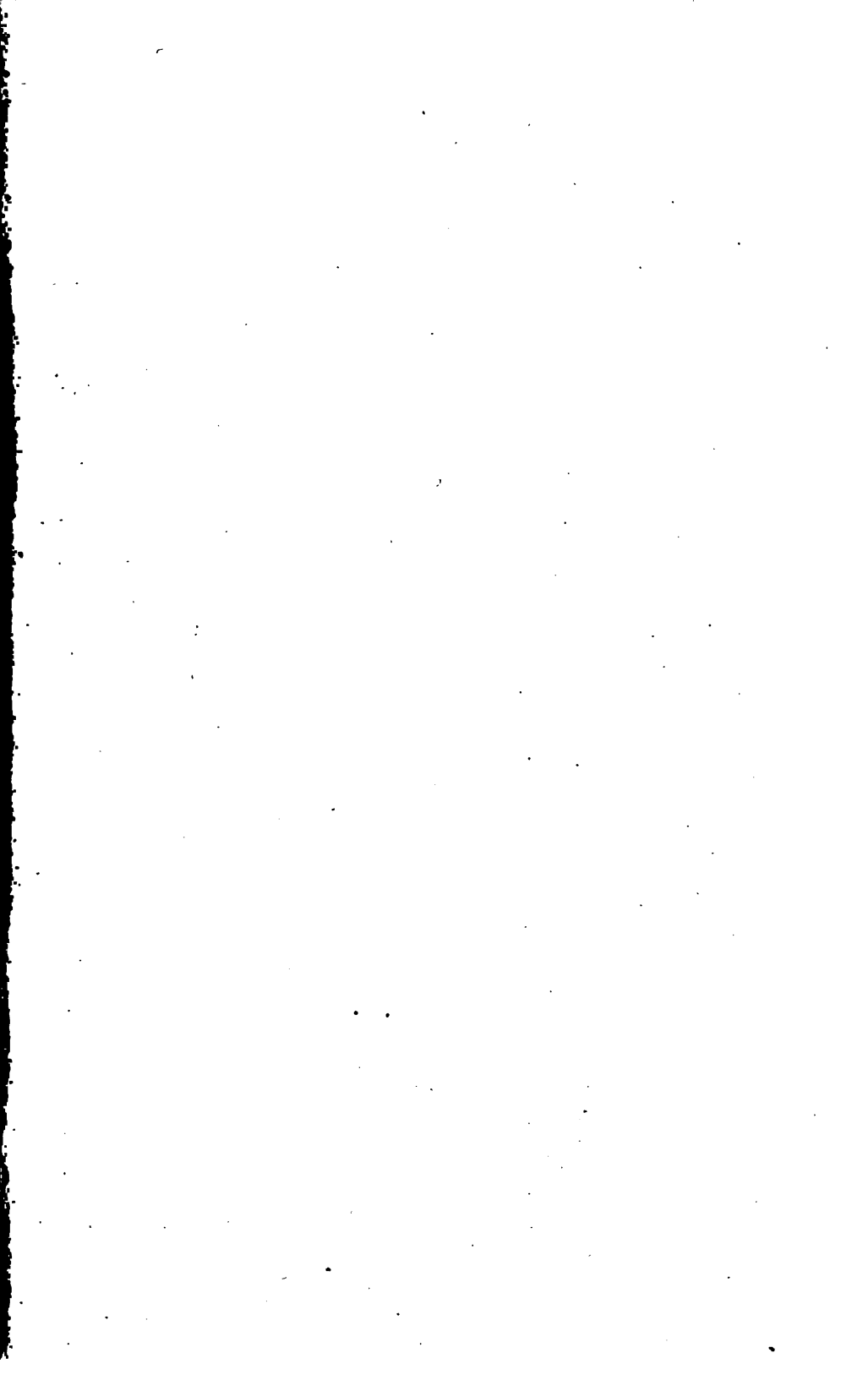
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\* I have seldom seen any drawings etched with a pen, that pleased me. The most masterly sketches in this way I ever saw, were taken in the early part of the life of a gentleman, now very high in his profession, Mr. Mitford of Lincoln's inn. They were taken in several parts of Italy, and England; and tho they are mere memorandum-sketches, the subjects are so happily chosen — they are so characteristic of the countries they represent — and executed with so free, and expressive a touch, that I examined them with pleasure, not only as faithful portraits, (which I believe they all are) but as master-pieces, as far as they go, both in composition, and execution.











Indian ink; and perhaps a little bistre, or burnt umber. With the former we give that greyish tinge, which belongs to the sky, and distant objects; and with the latter (mixed more, or less with Indian ink) those warm touches, which belong to the foreground. Indian ink however alone makes a good wash both for the foreground, and distance.

But mere *light and shade* are not sufficient: something of *effect* also should be aimed at in the *adorned sketch*. Mere light and shade propose only the *simple illumination* of objects. *Effect*, by balancing *large masses* of each, gives the whole a greater force.——Now tho in the exhibitions of nature, we commonly find only the *simple illumination* of objects; yet as we often do meet with *grand effects* also, we have sufficient authority to use them: for under these circumstances we see nature in her best attire, in which it is our business to describe her.

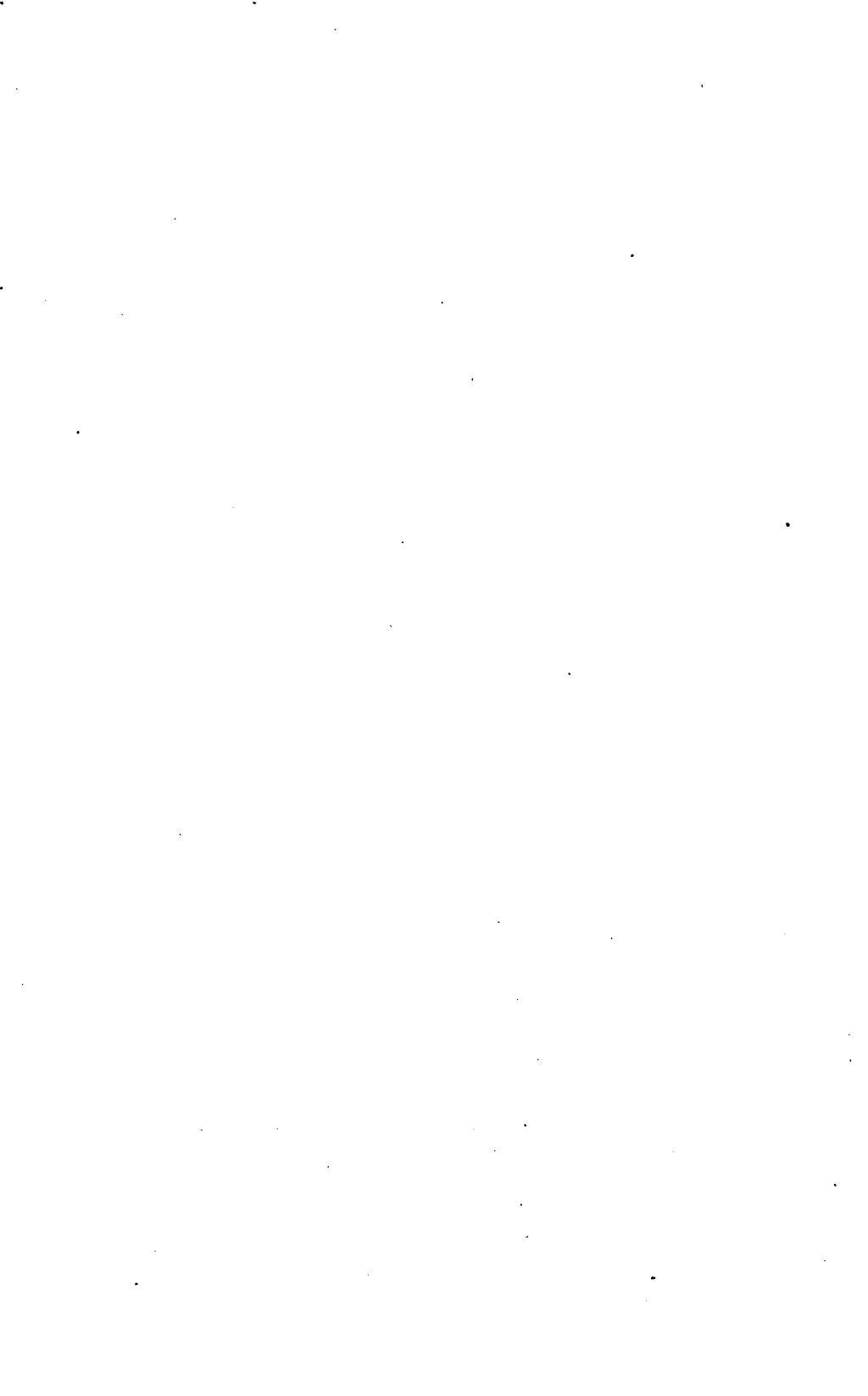
As to giving rules for the production of *effect*, the subject admits only the *most general*. There must be a strong opposition of light and shade; in which the sky, as well as the landscape, must combine. But in what way this opposition must be varied — where  
the

the full tone of shade must prevail — where the full effusion of light — or where the various degrees of each — depends intirely on the circumstances of the *composition*. All you can do, is to examine your drawing (yet in it's naked outline) with care; and endeavour to find out where the force of the light will have the best effect. But this depends more on *taste*, than on *rule*.

One thing both in light and shade should be observed, especially in the former — and that is *gradation*; which gives a force beyond what a glaring display of light can give. The effect of light, which falls on the stone, produced as an illustration of this idea, would not be so great, unless it *graduated* into shade. — In the following stanza Mr. Gray has with great beauty and propriety, illustrated the vicissitudes of life by the principles of picturesque effect.

Still where rosy pleasure leads,  
See a kindred grief pursue :  
Behind the steps, which misery treads,  
Approaching comfort view.  
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,  
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;  
And, blended, form with artful strife,  
The strength, and harmony of life.

I may





ARCHIÆ Q. CRETI  
METELI N. CRASSI



I may farther add, that the production of an *effect* is particularly necessary in *drawing*. In *painting*, colour in some degree makes up the deficiency: but in simple clair-obscur there is no succedaneum. It's force depends on effect; the virtue of which is such, that it will give a value even to a barren subject. Like striking the chords of a musical instrument, it will produce harmony, without any richness of composition.

It is farther to be observed, that when objects *are in shadow*, the light, (as it is then a reflected one,) falls on the opposite side to that, on which it falls, when they are lightened.

In *adorning your sketch*, a figure, or two may be introduced with propriety. By figures I mean moving objects, as waggons, and boats, as well as cattle, and men. But they should be introduced sparingly. In profusion they are affected. Their chief use is, to mark a road—to break a piece of foreground—to point out the horizon in a sea-view—or to carry off the distance of retiring water by the contrast of a dark sail, not quite so distant, placed before it. But in figures thus designed for the ornament of a sketch, a few slight touches

touches are sufficient. Attempts at finishing offend\*.

Among trees, little distinction need be made, unless you introduce the pine, or the cypress, or some other singular form. The oak, the ash, and the elm, which bear a distant resemblance to each other may all be characterized alike. In a sketch, it is enough to mark *a tree*. One distinction indeed is often necessary even in sketches; and that is, between full-leaved trees, and those of straggling ramification. In composition we have often occasion for both, and therefore the hand should be used readily to execute either. If we have a general idea of the oak, for instance, as a light tree; and of the beech as a heavy one, it is sufficient.

It adds, I think, to the beauty of a sketch to stain the paper slightly with a reddish, or yellowish tinge; the use of which is to give a more pleasing tint to the ground of the drawing by taking off the glare of the paper. It adds also, if it be not too strong, a degree of harmony to the rawness of black and white.

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\* See the preceding essay.





The strength, or faintness of this tinge depends on the strength, or faintness of the drawing. A slight sketch, should be slightly tinged. But if the drawing be highly finished, and the shadows strong; the tinge also may be stronger. Where the shadows are very dark, and the lights catching, a deep tinge may sometimes make it a good fun-set. —

This tinge may be laid on, either before, or after the drawing is made. In general, I should prefer the latter method; because, while the drawing is yet on white paper, you may correct it with a sponge, dipt in water; which will, in a good degree, efface Indian ink. But if you rub out any part, *after* the drawing is stained, you cannot easily lay the stain again upon the rubbed part without the appearance of a patch.

Some chuse rather to add a little colour to their sketches. My instructions attempt not the art of mixing a variety of tints; and finishing a drawing from nature; which is generally executed in colours from the beginning, without any use of Indian ink; except

as

as a grey tint, uniting with other colours. This indeed, when chaste executed, (which is not often the case) exceeds in beauty every other species of drawing. It is however beyond my skill to give any instruction for this mode of drawing. All I mean is only to offer a modest way of tinting a sketch already finished in Indian ink, by the addition of a little colour; which will give some distinction to objects; and introduce rather a gayer stile into a landscape.

When you have finished your sketch therefore with Indian ink, as far as you propose, tinge the whole over with some light horizon hue. It may be the rosy tint of morning; or the more ruddy one of evening; or it may incline more to a yellowish, or a greyish cast. The first tint you spread over your drawing, is composed of light red, and oaker, which make an orange. It may incline to one, or the other, as you chuse. By washing this tint over your *whole drawing*, you lay a foundation for harmony. When this wash is nearly dry, repeat it in the horizon; softening it off into the sky, as you ascend. — Take next a purple tint, composed of lake, and blue, inclining

inclining rather to the former ; and with this, when your first wash is dry, form your clouds ; and then spread it, as you did the first tint, over your *whole drawing*, except where you leave the horizon-tint. This still strengthens the idea of harmony. Your sky, and distance are now finished.

You next proceed to your *middle*, and *fore-grounds* ; in both which you distinguish between the *soil*, and the *vegetation*. Wash the *middle grounds* with a little umber. This will be sufficient for the *soil*. The *soil* of the *foreground* you may go over with a little light red. The *vegetation* of each may be washed with a green, composed of blue, and oker ; adding a little more oker as you proceed nearer the eye ; and on the nearest grounds a little burnt terra Sienna. This is sufficient for the *middle grounds*. The *foreground* may farther want a little heightening both in the *soil*, and *vegetation*. In the *soil* it may be given in the lights with burnt terra Sienna ; mixing in the shadows a little lake : and in the *vegetation* with gallstone ; touched in places, and occasionally varied, with burnt terra Sienna.

Trees on the foreground are considered as a part of it ; and their foliage may be coloured

loured like the vegetation in their neighbourhood. Their stems may be touched with burnt terra Sienna. — Trees, in middle distances are darker than the lawns, on which they stand. They must therefore be touched twice over with the tint, which is given only once to the lawn.

If you represent clouds with bright edges, the edges must be left in the first orange; while the tint over the other part of the horizon is repeated, as was mentioned before.

A lowering, cloudy sky is represented by, what is called, a grey tint, composed of lake, blue, and oker. As the shadow deepens, the tint should incline more to blue.

The several tints mentioned in the above process, may perhaps the most easily be mixed before you begin; especially if your drawing be large. Dilute the raw colours in saucers: keep them clean, and distinct; and from them, mix your tints in other vessels.

I shall only add, that the *strength of the colouring* you give your sketch, must depend (as in the last case, where the whole drawing is tinged,) on the height, to which you have carried the Indian ink *finishing*. If it be only a  
slight



light sketch, it will bear only a light wash of colour.

This mode however of tinting a drawing, even when you tint as high as these instructions reach, is by no means calculated to produce any effect of colouring: but it is at least sufficient to preserve harmony. *This* you may preserve: an *effect of colouring* you cannot easily attain. It is something however to avoid a disagreeable excess: and there is nothing surely so disagreeable to a correct eye, as a tinted drawing (such as we often see) in which greens, and blues, and reds, and yellows are daubed without any attention to harmony. It is to the picturesque eye, what a discord of harsh notes is to a musical ear.\*

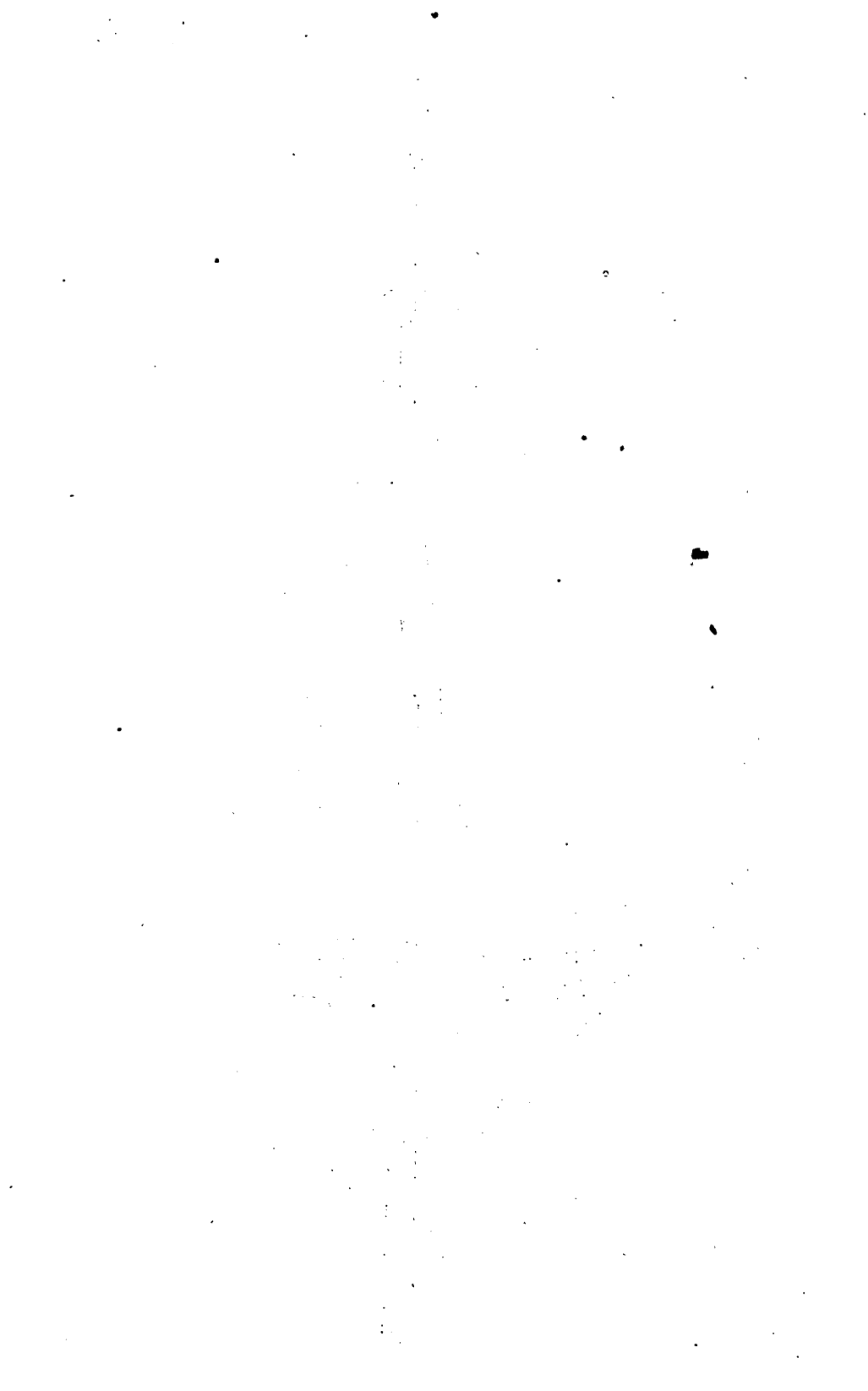
But the advocate for these glaring tints may perhaps say, he does not make his sky more

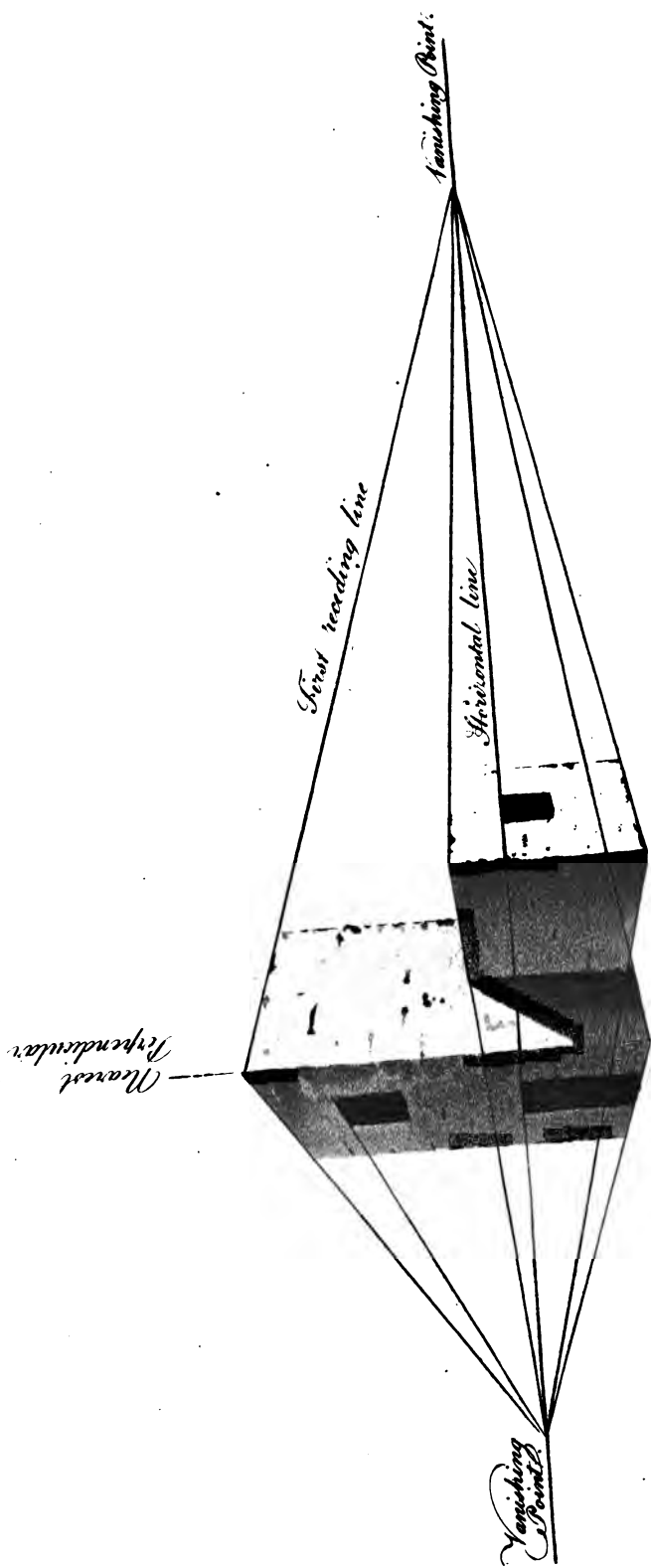
\* I have been informed, that many of the purchasers of the first edition of this work, have thought the plate, which illustrates what hath been said above, was not so highly coloured, as they wished it to have been. I apprehend this was chiefly owing to the particular care I took, to have it rather *under*, than *over* tinted. The great danger, I think, is on the side of being over-loaded with colour. I have however taken care that a number of the prints in this edition shall be coloured higher, that each purchaser may have an option.

blue than nature; nor his grafs, and trees more green.

Perhaps so: but unless he could work up his drawing with the *finishing* of nature also, he will find the effect very unequal. Nature mixes a variety of semi-tints with her brightest colours: and tho the eye cannot readily separate them, they have a general chastizing effect; and keep the several tints of landscape within proper bounds, which a glare of deep colours cannot do. Besides, this chastizing hue is produced in nature by numberless little shadows, beyond the attention of art, which she throws on leaves, and piles of grafs, and every other minute object; all of which, tho not easily distinguished in *particulars*, tell *in the whole*, and are continually chastening the hues of nature.

Before I conclude these remarks on sketching, it may be useful to add a few words, and but a few, on perspective. The nicer parts of it contain many difficulties; and are of little use in common landscape. Indeed in wild, irregular objects, it is hardly possible to apply it. The eye must regulate the winding  
of





of the river ; and the receding of the distant hill. Rules of perspective give little assistance. But it often happens, that on the nearer grounds you wish to place a more regular object, which requires some little knowledge of perspective. The subject therefore should not be left wholly untouched.

If a building stand exactly in front, none of it's lines can go off in perspective : but if it stand with a corner towards you, (as the picturesque eye generally wishes a building to stand) the lines will appear to recede. In what manner they may be drawn in perspective, the following mechanical method may explain.

Trace on your paper the *nearest perpendicular* of the building you copy. Then hold horizontally between it, and your eye, a shred of paper, or flat ruler ; raising, or lowering it, till you see only the edge. Where it cuts the *perpendicular* in the building, make a mark on your paper ; and draw a slight line through that point, parallel with the bottom of your picture. This is called the *horizontal line*. Observe next, with what accuracy you can (for it would require a tedious process to conduct it geometrically) the angle, which the *first receding line* of the building makes with the *nearest perpendicular* ;

*perpendicular* ; and in your drawing continue a similar line, till it meet the *horizontal line*. The point where it meets the *horizontal line*, is called the *vanishing point* : and regulates the whole perspective. From this point you draw a line to the *bottom* of the *nearest perpendicular*, which gives you the perspective of the base. In the same manner all the lines, which recede on both sides of the building, as well above, as below the *horizontal line* ; windows, doors, and projections of every kind, if they are on the *same plane*, are regulated.

If the building consist of projections on *different planes*, it would be tedious to regulate them all by the rules of perspective ; but the eye being thus master of the grand points, will easily learn to manage the smaller projections. — Indeed in drawing landscape, it may in general be enough to be acquainted with the principles of perspective. One of the best rules in adjusting *proportion* is, *to carry your compasses in your eye*. The same rule may be given in *perspective*. Accustom your eye to judge, how objects recede from it. Too strict an application of rules tends only to give your drawing stiffness, and formality. Indeed where the regular works of art make the *prin-*  
*cipal*

*cipal part* of your picture, the strictest application of rule is necessary. It is this, which gives it's chief value to the pencil of Canaletti. His truth in perspective has made subjects interesting, which are of all others the most un- promising.

Before I conclude the subject, I should wish to add, that the plate here given as an explanation, is designed merely as such; for no building can have a good effect, the base of which is so far below the horizontal line,

After all, however, from the mode of sketching here recommended (which is as far as I should wish to recommend drawing landscape to those, who draw only for amusement) no great degree of accuracy can be expected. General ideas only must be looked for: not the peculiarities of portrait. It admits the winding river — the shooting promontory — the castle — the abbey — the flat distance — and the mountain melting into the horizon. It admits too the relation, which all these parts bear to each other. But it descends not to the minutiae of objects. The

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fringed

fringed bank of the river — the Gothic ornaments of the abbey — the chafms, and fractures of the rock, and castle — and every little object along the vale, it pretends not to delineate with exactness. All this is the province of the finished drawing, and the picture; in which the artist conveys an idea of each minute feature of the country he *delineates*, or *imagines*. But *high finishing*, as I have before observed, belongs only to a master, who can give *expressive touches*. The disciple, whom I am instructing, and whom I instruct only from my own experience, must have humbler views; and can hardly expect to please, if he go farther than a sketch, *adorned* as hath been here described.

Many gentlemen, who draw for amusement, employ their leisure on human figures, animal life, portrait, perhaps history. Here and there a man of genius makes some proficiency in these difficult branches of the art; but I have rarely seen any, who do. Distorted faces, and dislocated limbs, I have seen in abundance: and no wonder; for the science of anatomy, *even* as it regards painting, is with difficulty attained; and few who have  
studied



studied it their whole lives, have acquired perfection.

Others again, who draw for amusement, go so far as to handle the pallet. But in this the success of the ill-judging artist seldom answers his hopes; unless utterly void of taste, he happen to be such an artist as may be addressed in the sarcasm of the critic,

———— Sine rivali teque, et tua solus amares.

Painting is both a science, and an art: and if so very few attain perfection, who spend a life-time on it, what can be expected from those, who spend only their leisure? The very few gentlemen-artists, who excel in *painting*, scarce afford encouragement for common practice.

But the *art of sketching landscape* is attainable by a man of business: and it is certainly more useful; and, I should imagine, more amusing, to attain *some degree* of excellence in an inferior branch, than to be a mere bungler in a superior. Even if you should not excel in *execution* (which indeed you can hardly expect) you may at least by bringing home the delineation of a fine country, dignify an in-  
different

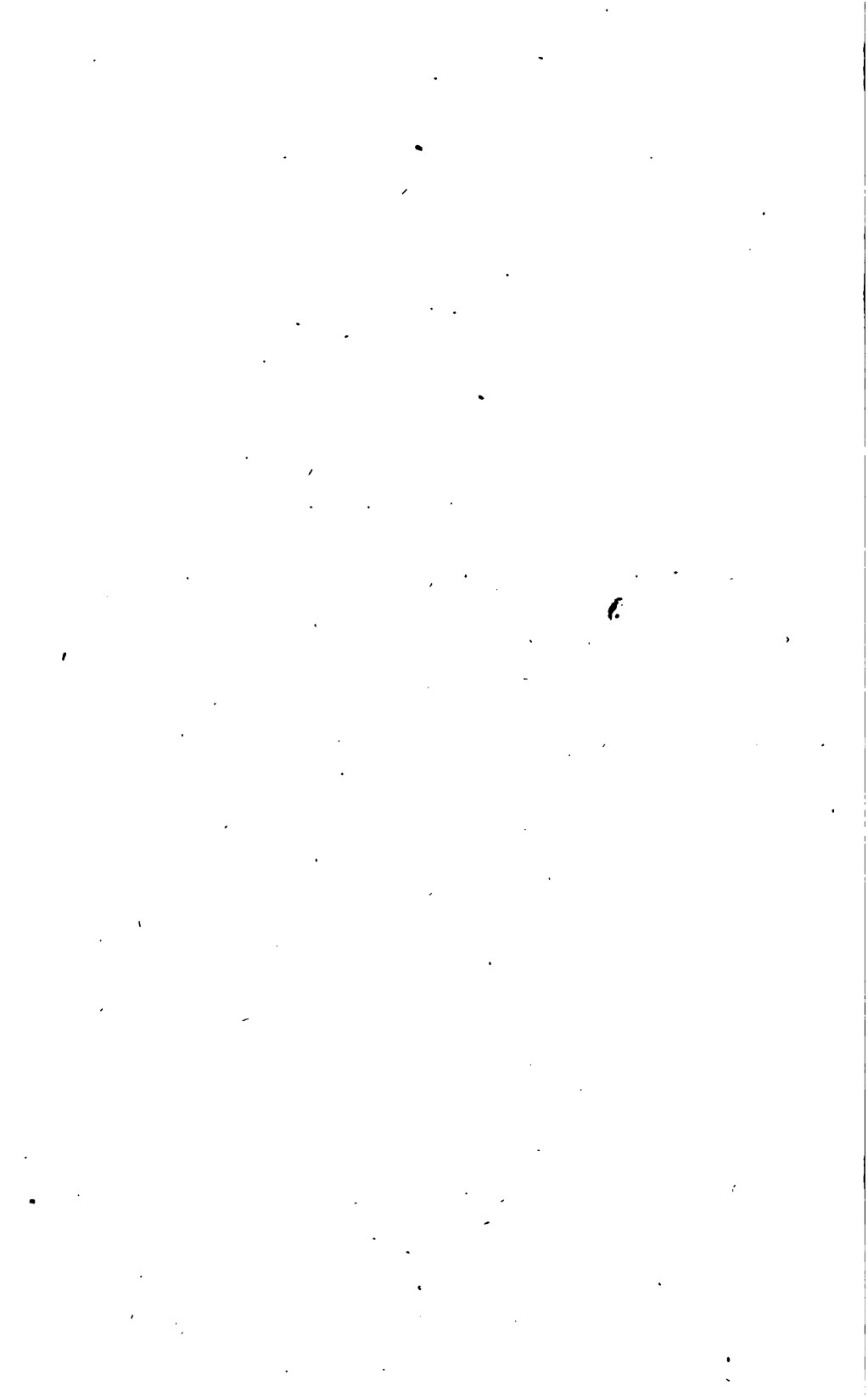
different sketch. You may please yourself by administering strongly to recollection ; and you may please others by conveying your ideas more distinctly in an ordinary sketch, than in the best language.

END OF THE THIRD ESSAY,

ON

LANDSCAPE PAINTING,

A POEM.



# C O N T E N T S

OF THE FOLLOWING

## P O E M.

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Line

- 1 **I**NTRODUCTION, and address.
- 26 **A** close attention to the various scenes of nature recommended; and to the several circumstances, under which they appear.
- 78 **A** facility also in copying the different *parts* of nature should be attained, before the young artist attempts a *whole*.
- 90 This process will also be a kind of *test*. No one can make any progress, whose imagination is not fired with the scenes of nature.
- 107 **O**n a supposition, that the artist is enamoured with his subject; and is well versed in copying the parts of nature, he begins  
to

to combine, and form those parts into the subjects of landscape. He pays his first attention to *design*, or to the bringing together of such objects, as are suited to his subject; not mixing trivial objects with grand scenes; but preserving the *character* of his subject; whatever it may be.

150 The different parts of his landscape must next be studiously arranged, and put together in a picturesque manner. This is the work of *disposition*; or, as it is sometimes called, *composition*. No rules can be given for this arrangement, but the experience of a nice eye: for the nature seldom presents a complete composition, yet we every where see in her works beautiful arrangements of parts; which we ought to study with great attention.

159 In general, a landscape is composed of three parts — a foreground — a middle ground — and a distance.

163 Yet this is not a universal rule. A *balance of parts* however there should always be; tho sometimes those parts may be few.

176 It is a great error in landscape-painters, to lose the *simplicity* of a whole, under the idea of giving *variety*.

182 Some

- 182 Some *particular scene*, therefore, or *leading subject* should always be chosen; to which the parts should be subservient.
- 205 In balancing a landscape, a spacious foreground will admit a small thread of distance: but the reverse is a bad proportion. In every landscape there *must* be a considerable foreground.
- 216 This theory is illustrated by the view of a *disproportioned distance*.
- 243 An objection answered, why vast distances, tho unsupported by foregrounds, may please *in nature*, and yet offend *in representation*.
- 266 But tho the several parts of landscape may be *well balanced*, and adjusted; yet still without *contrast in the parts*, there will be a great deficiency. At the same time this contrast must be easy, and natural.
- 285 Such pictures, as are painted from fancy, are the most pleasing efforts of genius. But if an untoward subject be given, the artist must endeavour to conceal, and vary the unaccommodating parts. The foreground he *must* claim as his own.
- 308 But if nature be the source of all beauty, it may be objected, that imaginary views can have little merit. — The objection has weight, if the imaginary view be not formed

formed from the select parts of nature ;  
but if it be, it is nature still.

322 The artist having thus adjusted his forms, and  
disposition ; conceives next the best effect  
of light ; and when he has thus laid the  
foundation of his picture, proceeds to  
colouring.

335 The author avoids giving rules for colouring,  
which are learned chiefly by practice.

341 He just touches on the theory of colours.

362 Artists, with equally good effect, sometimes  
blend them on their pallet ; and some-  
times spread them raw on their canvas.

383 In colouring, the sky gives the ruling tint to  
the landscape : and the hue of the whole,  
whether rich, or sober, must be harmo-  
nious.

426 A predominancy of shade has the best effect.

449 But light, tho it should not be scattered,  
should not be collected, as it were, into  
a focus.

464 The effect of *gradation* illustrated by the co-  
louring of cattle.

483 Of the disposition of light.

508 Of the *general harmony* of the whole.

517 A method proposed of examining a picture  
with regard to it's *general harmony*.

531 The scientific part being closed, all that can  
be said with regard to *execution*, is, that,  
as there are various modes of it, every  
artist



artist ought to adopt his own, or else he becomes a fervile imitator. On the whole, the bold free method recommended; which aims at giving the *character* of objects, rather than the *minute detail*.

565 Rules given with regard to figures. History in miniature, introduced in landscape, condemned. Figures should be suited to the scene.

620 Rules to be observed in the introduction of birds.

645 An exhibition is the truest test of excellence; where the picture receives it's stamp, and value not from the airs of coxcombs; but from the judgment of men of taste, and science!



ON  
LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

*A P O E M.*

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**T**HAT Art, which gives the practised pencil power  
To rival Nature's graces; to combine  
In one harmonious whole her scattered charms,  
And o'er them fling appropriate force of light,  
I sing, unskill'd in numbers; yet a Muse, 5  
Led by the hand of Friendship, deigns to lend  
Her aid, and give that free colloquial flow,  
Which best befits the plain preceptive song.

To thee, thus aided, let me dare to sing,  
Judicious Lock; who from great Nature's realms 10  
Hast culled her loveliest features, and arranged  
In thy rich memory's storehouse: Thou, whose glance,  
Practised in truth and symmetry can trace  
In every latent touch, each Master's hand;  
Whether the marble by his art subdued 15  
Be softened into life, or canvas smooth

Be swell'd to animation : Thou, to whom  
 Each mode of landscape, beauteous or sublime,  
 With every various colour, tint, and light,  
 It's nice gradations, and it's bold effects, 20  
 Are all familiar, patient hear my song,  
 That to thy taste and science nothing new  
 Presents ; yet humbly hopes from thee to gain  
 That plaudit, which, if Nature first approve,  
 Then, and then only, thou wilt deign to yield. 25

First to the youthful artist I address  
 This leading precept : Let not inborn pride,  
 Presuming on thy own inventive powers,  
 Mislead thine eye from Nature. She must reign  
 Great archetype in all. Trace then with care 30  
 Her varied walks. Observe how she upheaves  
 The mountain's towering brow ; on it's rough sides  
 How broad the shadow falls ; what different hues  
 Invest it's glimmering surface. Next survey  
 The distant lake ; so seen, a shining spot : 35  
 But when approaching nearer, how it flings  
 It's sweeping curves around the shooting cliffs.  
 Mark every shade it's Proteus-shape assumes  
 From motion and from rest ; and how the forms  
 Of tufted woods, and beetling rocks, and towers 40  
 Of ruined castles, from the smooth expanse,  
 Shade answering shade, inverted meet the eye.  
 From mountains hie thee to the forest-scene.  
 Remark the form, the foliage of each tree,  
 And what it's leading feature. View the oak, 45  
 It's

It's maffy limbs, it's majesty of fhade ;  
 The pendent birch ; the beech of many a ftem ;  
 The lighter afh ; and all their changeful hues  
 In fpring or autumn, ruffet, green, or grey.

Next wander by the river's mazy bank. 50  
 See where it dimpling glides ; or briskly where  
 It's whirling eddies sparkle round the rock ;  
 Or where, with headlong rage, it dashes down  
 Some fractured chafm, till all it's fury fpent,  
 It finks to fleep, a filent ftagnant pool, 55  
 Dark, tho tranflucient, from the mantling fhade.

Now give thy view more ample range : explore  
 The vaft expanfe of ocean ; fee, when calm,  
 What Iris-hues of purple, green, and gold,  
 Play on it's glaffy furface ; and when vexed 60  
 With ftorms, what depth of billowy fhade, with light  
 Of curling foam contrafted. View the cliffs ;  
 The lonely beacon, and the diftant coaft, •  
 In mifts arrayed, juft heaving into fight  
 Above the dim horizon ; where the fail 65  
 Appears conspicuous in the lengthened gleam.

With ftudious eye examine next the vaft  
 Etherial concave : mark each floating cloud ;  
 It's form, it's colour ; and what mafs of fhade  
 It gives the fcene below, pregnant with change 70  
 Perpetual, from the morning's purple dawn,  
 Till the laft glimmering ray of ruffet eve.  
 Mark how the fun-beam, fteeped in morning-dew,  
 Beneath each jutting promontory flings  
 A darker fhade ; while brightened with the ray 75

Of fultry noon, not yet entirely quenched,  
The evening-shadow less opaquely falls.

Thus stored with fair ideas, call them forth  
By practice, till thy ready pencil trace  
Each form familiar : but attempt not thou 80  
A *whole*, till every *part* be well conceived.  
The tongue that awes a senate with it's force,  
Once lisped in syllables, or e'er it poured  
It's glowing periods, warm with patriot-fire.

At length matured, stand forth for honest Fame 85  
A candidate. Some nobler theme select  
From Nature's choicest scenes ; and sketch that theme  
With firm, but easy line ; then if my song  
Assist thy power, it asks no higher meed.

Yet if, when Nature's sovereign glories meet 90  
Thy sudden glance, no corresponding spark  
Of vivid flame be kindled in thy breast ;  
If calmly thou canst view them ; know for thee  
My numbers flow not : seek some fitter guide  
To lead thee, where the low mechanic toils 95  
With patient labour for his daily hire.

But if the true genius fire thee, if thy heart  
Glow, palpitate with transport, at the sight ;  
If emulation seize thee, to transfuse  
These splendid visions on thy vivid chart ; 100  
If the big thought seem more than Art can paint ;  
Haste, snatch thy pencil, bounteous Nature yields  
To thee her choicest stores ; and the glad Muse  
Sits by assistant, aiming but to fan

The

The Promethèan flame, conscious her rules 105  
Can only guide, not give, the warmth divine.

First learn with *objects suited to each scene*  
Thy landscape to adorn. If some rude view  
Thy pencil culls, of lake, or mountain-range,  
Where Nature walks with proud majestic step, 110  
Give not her robe the formal folds of art,  
But bid it flow with ample dignity.

Mix not the mean and trivial: Is the *whole*  
Sublime, let each accordant *part* be grand.

Yet if through dire necessity (for that 115  
Alone should force the deed) some *polished scene*  
Employ thy pallet, dressed by human art,  
The lawn so level, and the bank so trim,  
Yet still *preserve thy subject*. Let the oak  
Be elegant of form, that mantles o'er 120

Thy shaven fore-ground. The rough forester  
Whose peeled and withered boughs, and gnarled trunk,  
Have stood the rage of many a winter's blast,  
Might ill such cultured scenes adorn. Not less  
Would an old Briton, rough with martial scars, 125  
And bearing stern defiance on his brow,  
Seem fitly stationed at a Gallic feast.

Such apt selection of accordant forms  
The muse herself requires from those her sons  
Epic, or Tragic, who aspire to fame 130  
Legitimate. On them, whose motly taste  
Unites the fock, and buskin — who produce  
Kings, and buffoons in one incongruous scene,  
She darts a frown indignant. Nor suppose

Thy humbler subject less demands the aid. 135  
 Of just *Design*, than Raphael's; tho his art  
 Give all but motion to some group divine,  
 While thine inglorious picture woods, and streams.

With equal rigour DISPOSITION claims  
 Thy close attention. Would'st thou learn it's laws, 140  
 Examine Nature, when combined with art,  
 Or simple; mark how various are her forms,  
 Mountains enormous, rugged rocks, clear lakes,  
 Castles, and bridges, aqueducts and fanes.  
 Of these observe, how some, united please; 145  
 While others, ill-combined, disgust the eye.  
 That principle, which rules these various parts,  
 And harmonizing *all*, produces *one*,  
 Is *Disposition*. By it's plastic pow'r  
 Those rough materials, which *Design* selects,  
 Are nicely balanced. Thus with friendly aid 150  
 These principles unite: *Design* presents  
 The general subject; *Disposition* culls,  
 And recombines, the various forms anew.

Rarely to more than three distinguished parts  
 Extend thy landscape: nearest to the eye 155  
 Present thy foreground; then the midway space;  
 E'er the blue distance melt in liquid air.

But tho full oft these parts with blending tints  
 Are softened so, as wakes a frequent doubt  
 Where each begins, where ends; yet still preserve 160  
 A *general balance*. So when Europe's sons

Sound



Sound the alarm of war ; some potent hand  
 (Now thine again my Albion) poises true  
 The scale of empire ; curbs each rival power ;  
 And checks each lawless tyrant's wild career. 165

Not but there are of fewer parts who form  
 A pleasing picture. These a forest-glade  
 Suffices oft ; behind which, just removed,  
 One tuft of foliage, WATERLOO, like thine,  
 Gives all we wish of dear variety. 170

For even variety itself may pall,  
 If to the eye, when pausing with delight  
 On one fair object, it presents a mass  
 Of many, which disturb that eye's repose.  
 All hail Simplicity ! To thy chaste shrine, 175  
 Beyond all other, let the artist bow.

Oft have I seen arranged, by hands that well  
 Could pencil Nature's *parts*, landscapes, that knew  
 No *leading subject* : Here a forest rose ;  
 A river there ran *dimpling* ; and beyond, 180  
 The portion of a lake : while rocks, and towers,  
 And castles intermixed, spread o'er the whole  
 In multiform confusion. Ancient dames  
 Thus oft compose of various filken shreds,  
 Some gaudy, patched, unmeaning, tawdry thing, 185  
 Where bucks and cherries, ships and flowers, unite  
 In one rich compound of absurdity.

Chuse then some *principal commanding theme*,  
 Be it lake, valley, winding stream, cascade,  
 Castle, or sea-port, and on *that* exhaust 190  
 Thy powers, and make to that all else conform.

Who

Who paints a landscape, is confined by rules,  
 As fixed and rigid as the tragic bard,  
 To *unity of subject*. Is the scene  
 A forest, nothing there, save woods and lawns 195  
 Must rise conspicuous. Episodes of hills  
 And lakes be far removed; all that obtrudes  
 On the chief theme, how beautiful so'er  
 Seen as a *part*, disgusts us in the *whole*.

Thus in the realms of landscape, to preserve 200  
*Proportion* just is *Disposition*'s task.

And tho a glance of distance it allow,  
 Even when the foreground swells upon the sight;  
 Yet if the distant scenery wide extend,  
 The foreground must be ample: Take free scope: 205  
 Art must have space to stand on, like the Sage,  
 Who boasted power to shake the solid globe.  
 This thou must claim; and if thy distance spread  
 Profuse, must claim it amply: Uncombined  
 With foreground, distance loses power to please. 210

Where rising from the solid rock, appear  
 Those ancient battlements, their lived a knight,  
 Who oft surveying from his castle wall  
 The wide expanse before him; distance vast;  
 Interminable wilds; savannahs deep; 215  
 Dark woods; and village spires, and glittering streams,  
 Just twinkling in the sun-beam, wished the view  
 Transferred to convuls; and for that sage end,  
 Led to the spot some docile son of art,  
 Where his own taste unerring previous fixed 220  
 The point of amplest prospect. "Take thy stand  
 "Just here," he cried, "and paint me *all* thou seest,  
 "Omit

"Omit no single object." It was done ;  
 And soon the live-long landscape cloaths his hall,  
 And spreads from base to ceiling. *All* was there ; 225  
 As to his guest, while dinner cooled, the knight  
 Full oft would prove ; and with uplifted cane  
 Point to the distant spire, where slept entombed  
 His ancestry ; beyond, where lay the town,  
 Skirted with wood, that gave him place and voice 230  
 In Britain's senate ; nor untraced the stream  
 That fed the goodly trout they soon should taste ;  
 Nor every scattered seat of friend, or foe,  
 He calls his neighbours. Heedless he, meanwhile,  
 That what he deems the triumph of his taste, 235  
 Is but a painted survey, a mere map ;  
 Which light and shade, and perspective misplaced,  
 But serve to spoil.

Yet why (methinks I hear  
 Some Critic say) do ample scenes, like this,  
 In *picture* fail to please ; when every eye 240  
 Confesses they transport on *Nature's chart* ?

Why, but because ; where *She* displays the scene,  
 The roving sight can pause, and swift select,  
 From all the offers, parts, whereon to fix,  
 And form distinct perceptions ; each of which 245  
 Presents a *separate picture*. Thus as bees  
 Condense within their hives the varying sweets ;  
 So does the eye a *lovely whole* collect  
 From *parts disjointed* ; nay, perhaps, *deformed*.  
 Then deem not Art defective, which divides, 250  
 Rejects,

Rejects, or recombines : but rather say,  
 'Tis her chief excellence. There is, we know,  
 A charm unspeakable in converse free  
 Of lover, or of friend, when soul with soul  
 Mixes in social intercourse ; when choice 255  
 Of phrase, and rules of rhetoric are disdained ;  
 Yet say, adopted by the tragic bard,  
 If Jaffier thus with Belvidera talked,  
 So vague, so rudely ; would not want of skill,  
 Selection, and arrangement, damn the scene? 260

Thy forms, tho *balanced*, still perchance may want  
 The charm of *Contrast* : Sing we then it's power.  
 'Tis Beauty's surest source ; it regulates  
 Shape, colour, light, and shade ; forms every line  
 By *opposition just* ; whate'er is *rough* 265  
 With skill delusive counteracts by *smooth* ;  
*Sinuous*, or *concave*, by it's opposite ;  
 Yet ever *covertly* : should *Art appear*,  
 That art were *Affectation*. Then alone  
 We own the power of *Contrast*, when the lines 270  
 Unite with Nature's freedom : then alone,  
 When from it's careless touch each part receives  
 A pleasing form. The lake's contracted bounds  
 By contrast varied, elegantly flow ;  
 The unweildy mountain sinks ; here, to remove 275  
 Offensive parallels, the hill depressed  
 Is lifted ; there the heavy beech expunged  
 Gives place to airy pines ; if two bare knolls

Rife

Rise to the right and left, a castle here,  
And there a wood, diversify their form. 280

Thrice happy he, who always can indulge  
This pleasing feast of fancy ; who, replete  
With rich ideas, can arrange their charms  
As his own genius prompts, creating thus  
A novel whole. But tasteless wealth oft claims 285  
The *faithful portrait*, and will fix the scene  
Where Nature's lines run falsely, or refuse  
To harmonize. Artist, if thus employed,  
I pity thy mischance. Yet there are means  
Even here to hide defects. The human form 290  
Portrayed by Reynolds, oft abounds with grace  
He saw not in his model ; which nor hurts  
Resemblance, nor fictitious skill betrays.  
Why then, if o'er the limb uncouth he flings  
The flowing vest, may not thy honest art 295  
Veil with the foliage of some spreading oak,  
Unpleasing objects, or remote, or near ?  
An ample licence for such needful change,  
The foregrounds give thee. There both mend and make.  
Whoe'er opposes, tell them, 'tis the spot 300  
Where fancy needs must sport ; where, if restrained  
To close resemblance, thy best art expires.

What if they plead, that from thy general rule,  
That rests on Nature as the only source  
Of beauty, thou revolt'st ; tell them that rule 305  
Thou hold'st still sacred : Nature *is* it's source ;  
Yet Nature's *parts* fail to receive alike

The

The fair impressi<sup>on</sup>. View her varied range :  
 Each form that charms is there ; yet her best forms  
 Must be *selected*. As the sculptured charms 310  
 Of the famed Venus grew, so must thou cull  
 From various scenes such parts as best create  
 One perfect whole. If Nature ne'er arrayed  
 Her most accomplished work with grace compleat,  
 Think, will she waste on desert rocks, and dells, 315  
 What she denies to Woman's charming form ?

And now, if on review thy chalked *design*,  
 Brought into form by *Disposition's* aid,  
 Displease not, trace thy lines with pencil free ;  
 Add lightly too that *general mass* of shade, 320  
 Which suits the form and fashion of it's parts.  
 There are who, studious of the best effects,  
 First sketch a slight cartoon. Such previous care  
 Is needful, where the Artist's fancy fails  
 Precisely to foresee the future whole. 325

This done, prepare thy pallet, mix thy tints,  
 And call on chaste Simplicity again  
 To save her votary from whate'er of hue,  
 Discordant or abrupt, may flaunt, or glare.

Yet here to bring materials from the mine, 330  
 From vegetable dies, or animal,  
 And sing their various properties and powers,  
 The muse descends not. To mechanic rules,  
 To prose, and practice, which can only teach  
 The use of pigments, she resigns the toil. 335

One

One truth she gives, that Nature's simple loom  
 Weaves but with three distinct, or mingled, hues,  
 The vest that cloaths Creation. These are red,  
 Azure, and yellow. Pure and unstained white  
 (If colour justly called) rejects her law, 340  
 And is by her rejected. Dost thou deem  
 The glossy surface of yon heifer's coat  
 A perfect white? Or yon vast heaving cloud  
 That climbs the distant hill? With ceruse bright  
 Attempt to catch it's tint, and thou wilt fail. 345  
 Some tinge of purple, or some yellowish brown,  
 Must first be blended, e'er thy toil succeed.  
 Pure white, great Nature wishes to expunge  
 From all her works; and only then admits,  
 When with her mantle broad of fleecy snow 350  
 She wraps them, to secure from chilling frost;  
 Conscious, mean while, that what she gives to guard,  
 Conceals their every charm: the stole of night  
 Not more eclipses: yet that fable stole  
 May, by the skilful mixture of these hues, 355  
 Be shadowed even to dark Cimmerian gloom.

Draw then from these, as from three plenteous springs,  
 Thy brown, thy purple, crimson, orange, green,  
 Nor load thy pallet with a useless tribe  
 Of pigments: when commix'd with needful white, 360  
 As suits thy end, these native three suffice.  
 But if thou dost, still cautious keep in view  
 That harmony which these alone can give.

Yet

Yet still there are, who scorning all the rules  
 Of dull mechanic art, with random hand 365  
 Fling their *unblended* colours, and produce  
 Bolder effects by opposition's aid.

The sky, whate'er it's hue, to landscape gives  
 A corresponding tinge. The morning ray  
 Spreads it with purple light, in dew-drops steeped; 370  
 The evening fires it with a crimson glow.  
 Blows the bleak north? It sheds a cold, blue tint  
 On all it touches. Do light mists prevail?  
 A soft grey hue o'erspreads the general scene,  
 And makes that scene, like beauty viewed through gauze,  
 More delicately lovely. Chuse thy sky; 376  
 But let that sky, whate'er the tint it takes,  
 O'er-rule thy pallet. Frequent have I seen,  
 In landscapes well composed, aerial hues  
 So ill-preserved, that whether cold or heat, 380  
 Tempest or calm, prevailed, was dubious all.  
 Not so thy pencil, CLAUDE, the season marks:  
 Thou makest us pant beneath thy summer noon;  
 And shiver in thy cool autumnal eve.

Such are the powers of sky; and therefore Art 385  
 Selects what best is suited to the scene  
 It means to form: to this adapts a morn,  
 To that an evening ray. Light mists full oft  
 Give mountain-views an added dignity;  
 While tame impoverished scenery claims the force 390  
 Of splendid lights and shades; nor claims in vain.

Thy



Thy sky adjusted, all that is *remote*  
 First colour faintly : leaving to the last  
 Thy foreground. Easier 'tis, thou know'st, to spread  
 Thy floating foliage o'er the sky ; than mix 395  
 That sky amid the branches. Venture still  
 On warmer tints, as distances approach  
 Nearer the eye : Nor fear the richest hues,  
 If to those hues thou giv'st the meet support  
 Of strong opposing shade. A canvas once 400  
 I saw, on which the artist dared to paint  
 A scene in Indostan ; where gold, and pearl  
 Barbaric, flamed on many a brodered vest  
 Profusely splendid ; yet chaste art was there,  
 Opposing hue to hue ; each shadow deep 405  
 So spread, that all with sweet accord produced  
 A bright, yet modest whole. Thus blend thy tints,  
 Be they of scarlet, orange, green, or gold,  
 Harmonious, till one general glow prevail  
 Unbroken by abrupt and hostile glare. 410

Let shade predominate. It makes each light  
 More lucid, yet destroys offensive glare.  
 Mark when in fleecy showers of snow, the clouds  
 Seem to descend, and whiten o'er the land,  
 What unsubstantial unity of tinge 415  
 Involves each prospect : Vision is absorbed ;  
 Or, wandering through the void, finds not a point  
 To rest on. All is mockery to the eye.  
 Thus light diffused, debases that effect 419  
 Which shade improves. Behold what glorious scenes  
 Arise through Nature's works from shade. Yon lake  
 With

With all it's circumambient woods, far less  
 Would charm the eye, did not that dusky mist  
 Creeping along it's eastern shores, ascend  
 Those towering cliffs; mix with the ruddy beam 425  
 Of opening day, just damp it's fires, and spread  
 O'er all the scene a sweet obscurity.

But would'st thou see the full effect of shade  
 Well massed, at eve mark that upheaving cloud,  
 Which charged with all th' artillery of Jove, 430  
 In awful darkness, marching from the east,  
 Ascends; see how it blots the sky, and spreads,  
 Darker, and darker still, it's dusky veil,  
 Till from the east to west, the cope of heaven  
 It curtains closely round. Haply thou stand'st 435  
 Expectant of the loud convulsive burst,  
 When lo! the sun, just sinking in the west,  
 Pours from th' horizon's verge a splendid ray,  
 Which tenfold grandeur to the darkness adds.  
 Far to the east the radiance shoots, just tips 440  
 Those tufted groves; but all it's splendor pours  
 On yonder castled cliff, which chiefly owes  
 It's glory, and supreme effect, to shade.

Thus light, enforced by shadow, spreads a ray  
 Still brighter. Yet forbid that light to shine 445  
 A glittering speck; for this were to illumine  
 Thy picture, as the convex glass collects,  
 All to one dazzling point, the solar rays.

Whate'er the force of *opposition*, still  
 In soft *gradation* equal beauty lies.

450  
 When

When the mild lustre glides from light to dark,  
 The eye well-pleased pursues it. Mid the herds  
 Of variegated hue, that graze the lawn,  
 Oft may the artist trace examples just  
 Of this sedate effect, and oft remark 455  
 It's opposite. Behold yon lordly bull,  
 His fable head, his lighter shoulders tinged  
 With flakes of brown ; at length still lighter tints  
 Prevailing, graduate o'er his flank and loins  
 In tawny orange. What, if on his front 460  
 A star of white appear ? The general mass  
 Of colour spreads unbroken ; and the mark  
 Gives his stern front peculiar character.

Ah ! how degenerate from her well-clothed sire  
 That heifer. See her sides with white and black 465  
 So studded, so distinct, each jutting each,  
 The groundwork-colour hardly can be known.

Of lights, if more than two thy landscape boast,  
 It boasts too much. But if two lights be there,  
 Give one pre-eminence : with that be sure 470  
 Illume thy *foreground*, or thy *midway space* ;  
 But rarely spread it on the *distant scene*.  
 Yet there, if level plains, or fens appear,  
 And meet the sky, a lengthened gleam of light  
 Discreetly thrown, will vary the flat scene. 475

But if that distance be abruptly closed  
 By mountains, cast them into general shade :  
 Ill suit gay robes their hoary majesty.  
 Sober be all their hues ; except, perchance,

Approaching nearer in the midway space, 480  
 One of the giant-brethren tower sublime :  
 To him thy art may aptly give a gleam  
 Of radiance : 'twill befit his awful head,  
 Alike, when rising through the morning-dews  
 In misty dignity, the pale, wan ray, 485  
 Invests him ; or when, beaming from the west,  
 A fiercer splendor opens to our view  
 All his terrific features, rugged cliffs,  
 And yawning chafms, which vapours through the day  
 Had veiled ; dens where the lynx or pard might dwell  
 In noon-tide safety, meditating there 491  
 His next nocturnal ravage through the land.

Are now thy lights and shades adjusted all ?  
 Yet pause : perhaps the perspective is just ;  
 Perhaps each local hue is duly placed ; 495  
 Perhaps the light offends not ; *harmony*  
 May still be wanting. That which forms a whole  
 From colour, shade, gradation, is not yet  
 Obtained. Avails it ought, in civil life,  
 If here and there a family unite 500  
 In bonds of peace, while discord rends the land,  
 And pale-eyed Faction, with her garment dipped  
 In blood, excites her guilty sons to war ?

To aid thine eye, distrustful if this end  
 Be fully gained, wait for the twilight hour. 505  
 When the grey owl, sailing on lazy wing,  
 Her circuit takes ; when lengthened shades dissolve ;  
 Then in some corner place thy finished piece,  
 Free from each garish ray : Thine eye will there

Be

Be undisturbed by *parts* ; there will the *whole* 510  
 Be viewed collectively ; the distance there  
 Will from it's foreground pleasingly retire,  
 As distance ought, with true decreasing tone.  
 If not, if shade or light be out of place,  
 Thou feelt the error, and mayest yet amend. 515

Here science ceases : but to close the theme,  
 One labour still, and of Herculean cast,  
 Remains unfulg, the art to *execute*,  
 And what it's happiest mode. In this, alas !  
 What numbers fail ; tho paths, as various, lead 520  
 To that fair end, as to thy ample walls,  
 Imperial London. Every artist takes  
 His own peculiar manner ; save the hand  
 Coward, and cold, that dare not leave the track  
 It's master taught. Thou who wouldst boldly seize 525  
 Superior excellence, observe, with care,  
 The style of every artist ; yet disdain  
 To mimic even the best. Enough for thee  
 To gain a knowledge from what various modes  
 The same effect results. Artists there are 530  
 Who, with exactness painful to behold,  
 Labour each leaf, and each minuter moss,  
 Till with enamelled surface all appears  
 Completely smooth. Others with bolder hand,  
 By Genius guided, mark the general form, 535  
 The leading features, which the eye of taste,  
 Practised in Nature, readily translates.  
 Here lies the point of excellence. A piece,

Thus finished, tho perhaps the playful toil  
Of three short mornings, more enchants the eye, 540  
Than what was laboured through as many moons.

Why then such toil mispent? We never mean,  
With close and microscopic eye, to pore  
On every studied *part*. The practised judge  
Looks chiefly on the *whole*; and if thy hand 545  
Be guided by true science, it is sure  
To guide thy pencil freely. Scorn thou then  
On *parts minute* to dwell. The *character*  
Of objects aim at, not the *nice detail*.

Now is the scene compleat: with Nature's ease, 550  
Thy woods, and lawns, and rocks, and splendid lakes,  
And distant hills unite; it but remains  
To *people these fair regions*. Some for this  
Consult the sacred page; and in a nook  
Obscure, present the Patriarch's test of faith, 555  
The little altar, and the victim son:  
Or haply, to adorn some vacant sky,  
Load it with forms, that fabling bard supplies  
Who sang of bodies changed; the headlong steeds,  
The car upheaved of Phaeton, while he, 560  
Rash boy! spreads on the plain his pallid corse,  
His sisters weeping round him. Groups like these  
Besit not landscape: Say, does Abraham there  
Ought that some idle peasant might not do?  
Is there expression, passion, character, 565  
To mark the Patriarch's fortitude and faith?  
The scanty space which perspective allows,

Forbids,

Forbids. Why then degrade his dignity  
 By paltry miniature? Why make it thus  
 A mere appendage? Rather deck thy scene 570

With figures simply suited to it's style.  
 The *landscape* is thy object; and to that,  
 Be these the *under parts*. Yet still observe  
 Propriety in all. The speckled pard,  
 Or tawny lion, ill would glare beneath 575

The British oak; and British flocks and herds  
 Would graze as ill on Afric's burning sands.  
 If rocky, wild, and awful be thy views,  
 Low arts of husbandry exclude: The spade,  
 The plough, the patient angler with his rod, 580

Be banished thence; far other guests invite,  
 Wild as those scenes themselves, banditti fierce,  
 And gypsy-tribes, not merely to adorn,  
 But to impress that sentiment more strong,  
 Awaked already by the savage-scene. 585

Oft winding slowly up the forest glade,  
 The ox-team labouring, drags the future keel  
 Of some vast admiral: no ornament  
 Assists the woodland scene like this; while far  
 Removed, seen by a gleam among the trees, 590  
 The forest-herd in various groups repose.

Yet, if thy skill should fail to people well  
 Thy landscape, leave it desert. Think how CLAUDE  
 Oft crowded scenes, which Nature's self might own,  
 With forms ill-drawn, ill-chosen, ill-arranged, 595  
 Of man and beast, o'er loading with false taste

His fylvan glories. Seize them, Pestilence,  
And sweep them far from our disgusted sight!

If o'er thy canvass Ocean pours his tide,  
The full sized vessel, with it's swelling sail, 600  
Be cautious to admit; unless thy art  
Can give it cordage, pennants, masts, and form  
Appropriate; rather with a careless touch  
Of light, or shade, just mark the distant skiff.

Nor thou refuse that ornamental aid, 605  
The feathered race afford. When fluttering near  
The eye, we own absurdity results;  
They seem both fixed and moving: but beheld  
At proper distance, they will fill thy sky  
With animation. Leave them there free scope: 610  
Their *distant motion* gives us no offence.

Far up yon river, opening to the sea,  
Just where the distant coast extends a curve,  
A lengthened train of sea-fowl urge their flight.  
Observe their files! In what exact array 615  
The dark battalion floats, distinctly seen  
Before yon silver cliff! Now, now, they reach  
That lonely beacon; now are lost again  
In yon dark cloud. How pleasing is the sight!  
The forest-glade from it's wild, timorous herd, 620  
Receives not richer ornament, than here  
From birds this lonely sea-view. Ruins too  
Are graced by such addition: not the force  
Of strong and catching lights adorn them more,  
Than do the dusky tribes of rooks; and daws 625  
Fluttering their broken battlements among.

Place



Place but these feathered groups at distance due,  
 The eye, by fancy aided, sees them move,  
 (Flit past the cliff, or circle round the tower)  
 Tho each, a centinel, observe his post.

Thy landscape finished, tho it meet thy own 630  
 Approving judgment, still requires a test,  
 More general, more decisive. Thine's an eye  
 Too partial to be trusted. Let it hang  
 On the rich wall, which emulation fills ;  
 Where rival masters court the world's applause. 635  
 There travelled virtuosi, strolling round,  
 With strut important, peering though the hand,  
 Hollowed in telescopic form, survey  
 Each luckless piece, and uniformly damn ;  
 Assuming for their own, the taste they steal. 640  
 " This has not *Guido's* air : " " That poorly apes  
 " *Titian's* rich colouring : " " *Rembrandt's* forms are here,  
 " But not his light and shadow." Skilful they  
 In every hand, save Nature's. What if these  
 With *Gaspar* or with *Claude* thy work compare, 645  
 And therefore scorn it ; let the pedants prate  
 Unheeded. But if taste, correct and pure,  
 Grounded on practice ; or, what more avails  
 Than practice, observation justly formed  
 On Nature's best examples and effects, 650  
 Approve thy landscape ; if judicious Lock  
 See not an error he would wish removed,  
 Then boldly deem thyself the heir of Fame.

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# N O T E S

ON THE FOREGOING

## P O E M.

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Line

34 **SOME** perhaps may object to the word *glimmering*: but whoever has observed the playing lights, and colours, which often invest the summits of mountains, will not think the epithet improper.

45 *What it's leading feature*; that is the *particular character* of the tree. The different shape of the leaves, and the different mode of spreading it's branches, give every tree, a *distinct form*, or *character*. At a little distance you easily distinguish the oak from the ash; and the ash from the beech. It is this *general form*, not any *particular detail*, which the artist is instructed to get by heart. The same remark holds with regard

regard to other parts of nature. These *general forms* may be called the *painter's alphabet*. By these he learns to read her works; and also to make them intelligible to others.

- 61 *With light of curling foam contrasted.* The progress of each wave is this. Beneath the frothy curl, when it rises between the eye, and the light, the colour is pale green, which brightens from the base towards the summit. When a wave subsides, the summit falling into the base, extends, and raises it; and that part of the water which meets the succeeding wave, springs upward from the shock; the top forms into foam, and rolling over falls down the side, which has been shocked; presenting if the water be much agitated, the idea of a cascade.
- 77 *The evening-shadow less opaquely falls.* It is not often observed by landscape-painters, tho it certainly deserves observation, that the morning-shadows are darker than those of the evening.
- 101 *If the big-thought seem more than art can paint.* It is always a sign of genius to be dissatisfied with our own efforts; and to conceive more than we can express.

151 *Design presents the general subject, disposition, &c.* Some writers on the art of painting have varied this division. But it seems most proper, I think, to give the selection of the elements of landscape — the assembling of rocks, mountains, cataraacts, and other objects to *design* : while *disposition* is properly employed in the local arrangement of them.

159 The *general composition* of a landscape consists of three parts — the foreground — the second ground — and the distance. But no rule can be given for proportioning these parts to each other. There are ten thousand beautiful proportions; from which the eye of taste must select a good one. The foreground must always be considerable — in some cases, ample. It is the very basis, and foundation of the whole. — Nor is it a bad rule, I think, that some part of the foreground should be the highest part of the picture. In rocky, and mountainous views this is easy, and has generally a good effect. And sometimes even when a country is more level, a tree on the foreground, carried higher than the rest of the landscape, answers the end. At the same time in many species of landscape this rule

rule cannot easily be observed: nor is it by any means essential.

169 *Waterlo, like thine.* The subjects of this master seldom went beyond some little forest-view. He has etched a great number of prints in this stile of landscape; which for the beauty of the trees in particular, are much admired.

178 *Landscapes, that knew no leading subject.* There is not a rule in landscape-painting more neglected, or that ought more to be observed, than what relates to a *leading subject*. By the leading subject we mean, what *characterizes the scene*. We often see a landscape, which comes under no denomination, Is it the scenery about a ruin? Is it a lake-scene? Is it a river-scene? No: but it is a jumble of all together. Some leading subject therefore is required in every landscape, which forms it's character; and to which the painter

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is confined by rules,  
As fixed, and rigid as the tragic bard.

When the landscape takes it's character from a ruin, or other object on the foreground, the *distance* introduced, is merely an appendage; and must plainly appear to be an under-part; not interfering with the  
subject

subject of the piece. But most commonly the scene, or leading subject of the picture, occupies the middle distance. In this case, the *foreground* becomes the appendage; and without any striking object to attract the eye, must plainly shew, that it is intended only to introduce the leading-subject with more advantage.

194 Thus, in a forest-scene, the woods and lawns, are the leading subject. If the piece will allow it, a hill, or a lake, may be admitted in *remote distance*: but they must be introduced, only as the episodes in a poem, to set off the main subject. They must not interfere with it: but be *far removed*.

202 *And tho a glance.* It is certain, in fact, that a considerable foreground, with a glance of distance, will make a better picture, than a wide distance, set off only with a meagre foreground: and yet I doubt whether an adequate reason can be given; unless it be founded on what hath already been advanced, that we consider the foreground as the *basis, and foundation of the whole picture*. So that if it is not considerable in all circumstances, and extensive in some, there seems a defect.

285 *A novel whole.* The imaginary-view, formed on a judicious selection, and arrangement of the parts of nature, has a better chance to make a good picture, than a view taken in the whole from any natural scene. Not only the lines, and objects of the natural scene rarely admit a happy composition; but the *character* of it is seldom throughout preserved. Whether it be *sublime*, or *beautiful*, there is generally something mixed with it of a nature unsuitable to it. All this the exhibition of fancy rectifies, when in the hands of a master. Nor does he claim any thing, but what the poet, and he are equally allowed. Where is the story in real life, on which the poet can form either an epic, or a drama, unless heightened by his imagination? At the same time he must take care, that all his imaginary additions are founded in nature, or his work will disgust. Such also must be the painter's care. But under this restriction, he certainly may bring together a more *consistent whole*, culled from the *various parts* of nature, than nature herself exhibits in *any one scene*.

319 *Trace thy lines with pencil free.* The master is discovered even in his chalk, or black-lead lines — so free, firm, and intelligent.

We



We often admire these first, rude touches. The story of the two old masters will be remembered, who left cards of compliments to each other, on which only the simple outline of a figure was drawn by one, and corrected by the other; but with such a superior elegance in each, that the signature of names could not have marked them more decisively.

323 *First sketch a slight cartoon.* It is the practice indeed of the generality of painters, when they have any great design to execute, to make a slight sketch, sometimes on paper, and sometimes on canvas. And these sketches are often greatly superior to the principal picture, which has been laboured and finished with the exactest care. King William on horse-back at Hampton court, by sir Godfrey Kneller, is a striking example of this remark. The picture is highly finished; but is a tame, and unmasterly performance. At Houghton-hall I have seen the original sketch of this picture; which I should have valued, not only greatly beyond the picture itself, but beyond any thing I ever saw from the pencil of sir Godfrey.

336 *One truth she gives, &c.* From these three virgin colours, *red, blue, and yellow*, all the tints of nature are composed. Greens

of various hues, are composed of blue, and yellow : orange, of red, and yellow : purple and violet, of red, and blue. The tints of the rainbow seem to be composed also of these colours. They lie in order thus : violet—*red*—orange—*yellow*—green—*blue*—violet—*red* : in which assortment we observe that orange comes between *red*, and *yellow* ; that is, it is composed of those colours melting into each other, Green is in the same way composed of *yellow* and *blue* ; and violet, or purple of *blue*, and *red*.—Nay even browns of all kinds may, in a degree, be effected by a mixture of these original colours : so may grey ; and even a kind of black, tho not a perfect one.—As all pigments however are deficient, and cannot approach the rainbow colours, which are the purest we know, the painter must often, even in his splendid tints, call in different reds, blues, and yellows. Thus as vermillion, tho an excellent red on many occasions, cannot give a rosy, crimson hue, he must often call in lake, or carmine. Nor will he find any yellow, or blue, that will answer every purpose. In the tribe of browns he will still be more at a loss ; and must have recourse to different earths.—In oil-painting one of the finest earths is known,

at

at the colour-shops, by the name of *castle-earth*, or *Vandyke's-brown*; as it is supposed to have been used by that master.

341 *And is by her rejected.* Scarce any natural object, but snow, is purely white. The chalk-cliff is generally in a degree discoloured. The petals of the snow-drop indeed, and of some other flowers, are purely white; but seldom any of the larger parts of nature.

362 *Keep in view that harmony, &c.* Tho it will be necessary to use other colours, besides *yellow, red, and blue*, this union should however still be kept in view, as the leading principle of harmony. A mixture indeed of these three will produce nearly the colour you want: but the more you mix your colours, the muddier you make them. It will give more clearness therefore, and brightness to your colouring, to use simple pigments, of which there are great abundance in the painter's dispensatory.

364 This mode of colouring is the most difficult to attain, as it is the most scientific. It includes a perfect knowledge of the effects of colours in all their various agreements, and oppositions. When attained, it is the most easy in practice. The artist, who blends his colours on his pallet,

depends more on his eye,\* than on his knowledge. He works out his effect by a more laboured process; and yet he may produce a good picture in the end.

392 Nobody was better acquainted with the effects of sky, nor studied them with more attention, than the younger Vanderveldt. Not many years ago, an old Thames-walterman was alive, who remembered him well; and had often carried him out in his boat, both up and down the river, to study the appearances of the sky. The old man used to say, they went out in all kinds of weather, fair, and foul; and Mr. Vanderveldt took with him large sheets of blue paper, which he would mark all over with black, and white. The artist easily sees the intention of this process. These expeditions Vanderveldt called, in his Dutch manner of speaking, *going a skoying*.

407 The most remarkable instance of ingenious colouring I ever heard of, is in Guido's St. Michael. The whole picture is composed of blue, red, and black; by means of which colours the ideas of heaven and hell are blended together in a very extraordinary manner; and the effect exceedingly sublime; while both harmony, and chasteness are preserved in the highest degree.

411 *Let shade predominate.* As a general rule, the half-tints should have more extent than the lights; and the shadows should equal both together. — Yet why a predominancy of shade should please the eye more than a predominancy of light, would perhaps be difficult to explain. I can easily conceive, that a *balance* of light and shade may be founded in some kind of reason; but am at a loss to give a reason for a predominancy of either. The fact however is undoubted; and we must screen our ignorance of the principle, as well as we can.

446 This rule respects an *affected display of light*. If it be introduced as a focus, so as not to fall *naturally* on the several objects it touches, it disgusts. Rembrandt, I doubt, is sometimes chargeable with this fault. He is commonly supposed to be a master of this part of painting; and we often see very beautiful lights in his pictures, and prints: but as in many of them we see the reverse, he appears to have had no fixed principle. Indeed, few parts of painting are so much neglected, so easily transgressed, and so little understood, as the distribution of light.

449 *Opposition*, and *gradation* are the two grand means of producing effect by light. In

the picture just given (l. 429. &c.) of the evening-ray, the effect is produced by *opposition*. Beautiful effects too of the same kind arise often from *catching lights*.

—The power of producing effect by *gradation*, is not less forcible. Indeed, without a degree of *gradation opposition* itself would be mute. In the picture just given of the evening-ray, the grand part of the effect, no doubt, arises from the *opposition* between the gloom, and the light: but in part it arises also from the *gradation* of the light, till it reach its point. It just tips

The tufted groves; but all its splendor pours  
On yonder castled cliff. —————

- 452 The colours of animals often strongly illustrate the idea of *gradation*. When they soften into each other, from light or dark, or from one colour into another, the mixture is very picturesque. It is as much the reverse, when white and black, or white, and red, are patched over the animal in blotches, without any intermediate tints. Domestic cattle, cows, dogs, swine, goats, and cats, are often disagreeably patched, tho we sometimes see them pleasingly coloured with a *graduating tint*. Wild animals, in general, are more uniformly coloured,

coloured, than tame. Except the zebra, and two or three of the spotted race, I recollect none which are not, more or less, tinted in this graduating manner. The tiger, the panther, and other variegated animals have their beauty: but the zebra, I think, is rather a curious, than a picturesque animal. It's streaked sides injure it both in point of colour, and in the delineation of it's form.

472 *But rarely spread it on the distant scene.* In general perhaps a landscape is best lightened, when the light falls on the middle parts of the picture; and the foreground is in shadow. This throws a kind of natural retiring hue throughout the landscape: and tho the *distance be in shadow*, yet that shadow is so faint, that the retiring hue is still preserved. This however is only a general rule. In history-painting the light is properly thrown upon the figures on the foreground; which are the *capital part* of the picture. In landscape the middle grounds commonly form *the scene*, or the *capital part*; and the foreground is little more, than an appendage. Sometimes however it happens, that a ruin, or some other capital object on the foreground, makes the *principal part of the scene*. When that is the

case, it should be distinguished by light ; unless it be so situated as to receive more distinction from shade.

487 *A fiercer splendor opens to our view all his terrific features.* It is very amusing, in mountainous countries, to observe the appearance, which the same mountain often makes under different circumstances. When it is invested with light mists ; or even when it is not illuminated, we see it's whole summit perhaps under one grey tint. But as it receives the sun, especially an evening-sun, we see a variety of fractures, and chasms gradually opening, of which we discovered not the least appearance before.

493 *Tho the objects may lessen in due proportion, which is called keeping ; tho the graduating hue of retiring objects, or the aerial perspective, may be just ; and tho the light may be distributed according to the rules of art ; yet still there may not be that general result of harmony, which denotes the picture one object : and as the eye may be misled, when it has the several parts before it, the best way of examining it as a perfect whole, is to examine it in such a light, as will not admit the investigation of parts.*

534 *Others,*



- 534 *Others, &c.* Some painters copy exactly what they see. In this there is more mechanical precision, than genius. Others take a *general, comprehensive view* of their object; and marking just the *characteristic points*, lead the spectator, if he be a man of taste, and genius likewise, into a truer knowledge of it, than the copier can do, with all his painful exactness.
- 568 *Why then degrade, &c.* If by bringing the figures forward on the foreground, you give room for *character, and expression*, you put them out of place as *appendages*, for which they were intended.
- 586 *Of slowly winding, &c.* The machine itself here described is picturesque: and when it is seen in *winding motion*, or (in other words) when half of it is foreshortened, it receives additional beauty from contrast. In the same manner a cavalcade, or an army on it's march, may be considered as *one object*; and derive beauty from the same source. Mr. Gray has given us a very picturesque view of this kind, in describing the march of Edward I.;

As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side  
 He wound with toilsome march his long array.  
 Stout Gloucester stood aghast in speechless trance:  
 To arms! cried Mortimer; and couched his quivering lance.

Through

Through a passage in the mountain we see the troops winding round at a great distance. Among those nearer the eye, we distinguish the horse and foot; and on the foreground, the action, and expression of the principal commanders.

The ancients seem to have known very little of that source of the picturesque, which arises from perspective: every thing is introduced in front before the eye: and among the early painters we hardly see more attention paid to it. Raphael is far from making a full use of the knowledge of it: and I believe Julio Romano makes still less.

I do not remember meeting any where with a more picturesque description of a line of march, than in Vaillant's travels into the interior parts of Africa. He was passing with a numerous caravan, along the borders of Caffraria. I first, says he, made the people of the hord, which accompanied me, set out with their cattle. Soon after my cattle followed cows, sheep, and goats: with all the women of the hord, mounted on oxen with their children. My waggons, with the rest of my people, closed the rear. I myself, mounted on horseback, rode backwards, and forewards. This caravan  
on

on it's march, exhibited often a singular, and amusing spectacle. The turns it was obliged to make in following the windings of the woods, and rocks, continually gave it new forms. Sometimes it intirely disappeared: then suddenly, at a distance, from the summit of a hill, I again discovered my vanguard slowly advancing perhaps towards a distant mountain: while the main body, following the track, were just below me.

600 This rule indeed applies to all other objects: but as the ship is so large a machine, and at the same time so complicated a one, it's *character* is less obvious, than that of most other objects. It is much better therefore, where a vessel is necessary, to put in a few touches for a skiff; than to insert some disagreeable form for a ship, to which it has no resemblance. At the same time, it is not at all necessary to make your ship so accurate, that a ~~seaman~~ could find no fault with it. It is the same in figures: as appendages of landscape there is no necessity to have them exactly accurate; but if they have not the *general form*, and *character* of what they represent, the landscape is better without them.

603 They

608 *They seem, &c. Rapid motion*, alone, and that *near the eye*, is here censured. We should be careful however not to narrow too much the circumscribed sphere of art. There is an art of seeing, as well as of painting. The eye must in part enter into the deception. The art of painting must, in some degree, be considered as an act of convention. General forms only are imitated, and much is to be supplied by the imagination of the spectator. — It is thus in the drama. How absurdly would the spectator act, if instead of assisting the illusion of the stage, he should insist on being deceived, without being a party in the deception?—if he refused to believe, that the light he saw, was the sun; or the scene before him, the Roman capital, because he knew the one was a candle-light, and the other, a painted cloth? The painter therefore must in *many things* suppose deception; and only avoid it, where it is too *palpably gross* for the eye to suffer.

641 Guido's air, no doubt, is often very pleasing. He is thought to have excelled in imagining the angelic character; and, as if aware of this superiority, was fond of painting angels. After all, however, they, whose taste is formed on the simplicity  
of

of the antique, think *Guido's air*, in general somewhat theatrical.

- 643 *Skilful they, &c.* The greatest obstruction to the progress of art arises from the prejudices of conceited judges; who, in fact, know less about the matter, than they who know nothing: inasmuch as truth is less obvious to error, than it is to ignorance. Till they can be prevailed on to return upon their steps, and look for that criterion in nature, which they seek in the half-perished works of great names, the painter will be discouraged from pursuing knowledge in those paths, where Raphael, and Titian found it.—We have the same idea well enforced in Hogarth's analysis of beauty. (Introduc. p. 4.)
- “ The reason why gentlemen, inquisitive  
 “ after knowledge in pictures, have their  
 “ eyes less qualified to judge, than others,  
 “ is because their thoughts have been con-  
 “ tinually employed in considering, and  
 “ retaining the various *manners*, in which  
 “ pictures are painted—the histories, names,  
 “ and characters of the masters, together  
 “ with many other little circumstances be-  
 “ longing to the *mechanical* part of the  
 “ art; and little or no time has been given  
 “ to perfect the ideas they ought to have  
 “ in

“ in their minds, of the objects themselves  
 “ in nature. For having adopted their  
 “ first notions merely from *imitations* ; and  
 “ becoming too often as bigotted to their  
 “ faults, as to their beauties, they totally  
 “ disregard the works of nature, merely  
 “ because they do not tally with what their  
 “ minds are so strongly prepossessed with.  
 “ Were it not for this, many a reputed  
 “ capital picture, which now adorns the  
 “ cabinet of the curious, would long ago  
 “ have been committed to the flames.”

644 *What if these compare, &c.* Bruyere observes,  
 that the inferior critic judges only by  
*comparison*. In one sense all judgment  
 must be formed by comparison. But  
 Bruyere, who is speaking of poetry,  
 means, that the inferior critic has no  
 scale of judgment of a work of art, but  
 by comparing it with some other work  
 of the same kind. He judges of Virgil  
 by a comparison with Homer ; and of  
 Spencer by comparing him with Tasso.  
 By such criticism he may indeed arrive  
 at certain truths ; but he will never form  
 that masterly judgment, which he might  
 do by comparing the work before him  
 with the great archetypes of nature, and  
 the solid rules of his art.—What  
 Bruyere says of the critic in poetry, is  
 very

very applicable to the critic in painting. The inferior critic, who has travelled, and seen the works of many great masters, supposes he has treasured up from them the ideas of perfection; and instead of judging of a picture by the rules of painting, and it's agreement with nature, he judges of it by the arbitrary ideas he has conceived; and these too very probably much injured in the conception. From this comparative mode of criticizing, the art receives no advancement. All we gain, is, that one artist paints better than another.

END OF THE NOTES.





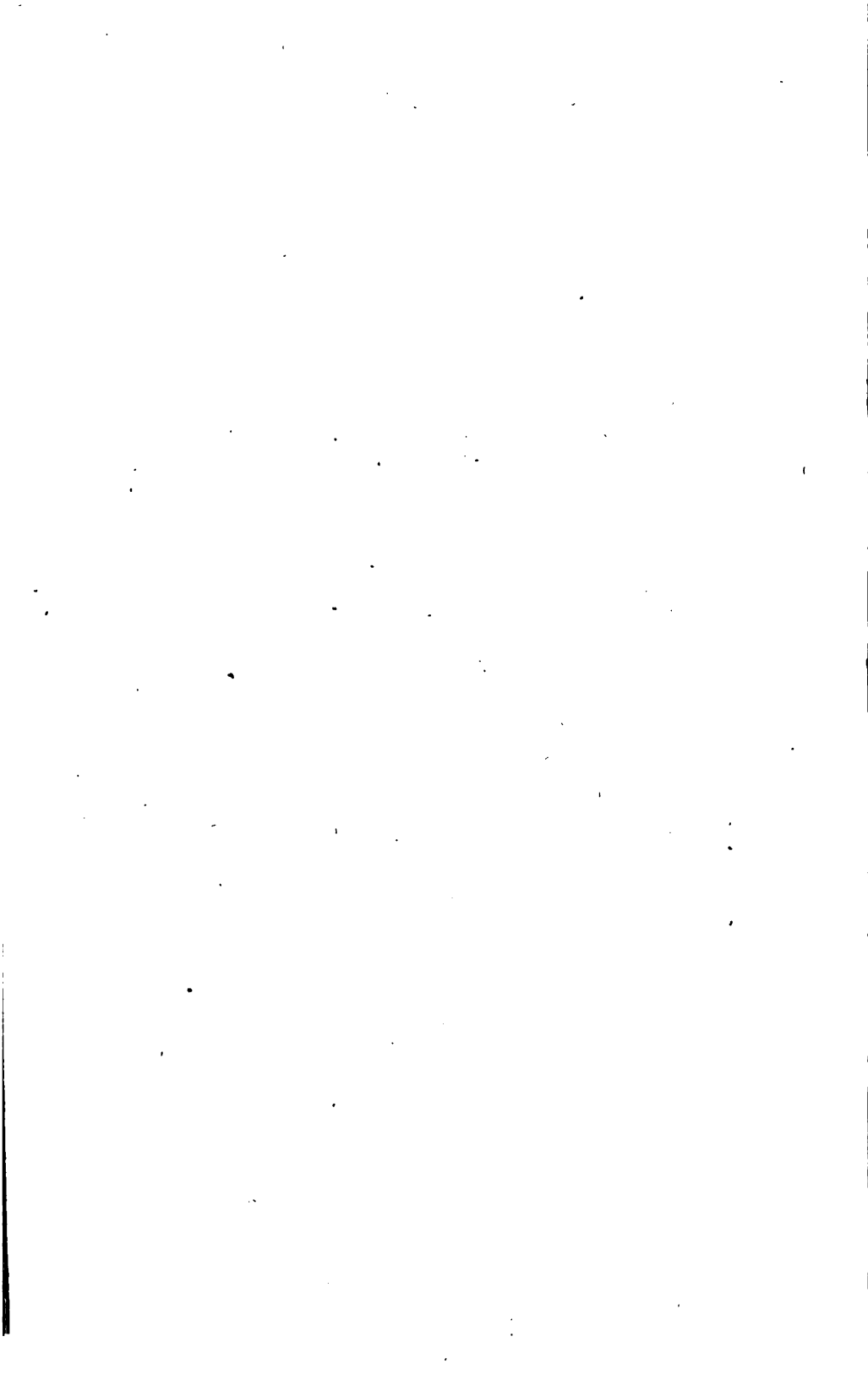
# **TWO ESSAYS:**

**ON THE**

**PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE AUTHOR MADE  
HIS DRAWINGS;**

**AND**

**THE MODE OF EXECUTING THEM.**



# **ESSAY I.**

**ON THE MODE IN WHICH THE AUTHOR EXECUTES  
THESE ROUGH SKETCHES.**



THESE sketches are in the same style as most of those which were offered before. They are *roughly finished*, pretending only to exhibit a little composition and effect. They are taken, indeed, from the same rough scenes of nature; and consist chiefly of mountains, rocks, rivers, and lakes. These ingredients, however, though few, afford such variety, and may be so infinitely combined, that the same objects may recur in various scenes, and yet none of those scenes may resemble each other: as in the human face there are only four features, yet they are capable of receiving so many variations, that no two faces are exactly alike.

The *pen* I use is made of a reed, which gives a much freer and easier stroke than a pen made of a quill, which never runs fluently on paper, but scratches it, and often sputters the ink. The reed pen may be cut to a fine point, where a slight touch is required, as sometimes in distant foliage; and when it grows blunt with a little use, it becomes something between a brush and a pen, and

gives a bold stroke, which has a good effect on the boles of trees, or on a foreground. But care should be taken to leave the strongest marks of the pen on the side opposite to that on which you mean the light to enter.

In *highly finished* drawings the pen is not generally used. The black lead lines are commonly wrought up into effect by the brush; but, in a rough sketch, the pen I think, is the best instrument, it gives a termination to an object at once, and marks it with freedom and spirit, which are the grand characteristics of a sketch.

The ink which is used with the pen in these drawings is what the callico-printers, I believe, call *iron-water*, and use in fixing their colours. It has a brownish tint, which is more pleasing to the eye, and unites better with the shade of Indian ink than common ink. Both Indian ink and common ink, lowered by water, want strength, and the latter retains always an unpleasant hue. I could never find any ink that was indelible but this iron-water. You may easily make an ink of the colour you wish, but when you wash a shade over it, it blurs, and runs. Sometimes, indeed, you find in old ink-stands a  
yellowish

yellowish ink, which is very good. But this is a precarious supply. I remember once being much disappointed in an attempt to procure some of this picturesque ink. I had money to pay to an old lady, who gave me a receipt, written out of a leaden stand full of it. It was before I had heard of the iron-water, and thinking I had met with a great treasure, I cast about how to get possession of it. I told the old lady, therefore, that I thought her ink was bad, and if she would trust her leaden pot with me, I would fill it with better. She courteously told me, if I did not like her receipt, she would draw me out another. It would have been in vain to have told her, as she was half deaf, and of confused intellect, that her bad ink was to me better than any other, and for what use I wanted it.

No instrument is more useful in drawing than a piece of moistened sponge. When the shade is too strong, it easily rubs it down, and the paper, when dry, as easily admits it again.

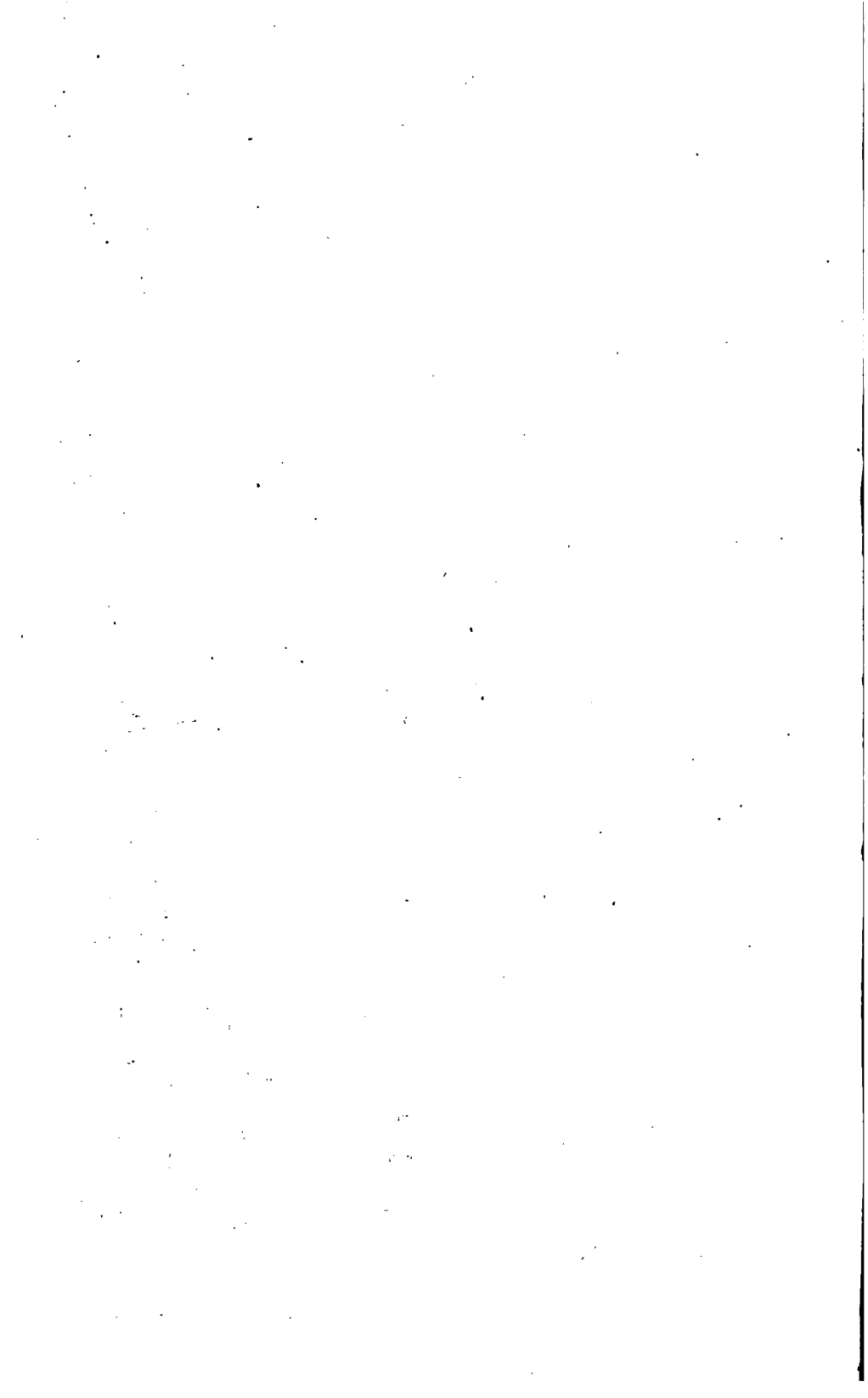
The tint, which is thrown over these drawings, after they are finished, is composed of gamboge and any brownish colour. It gives

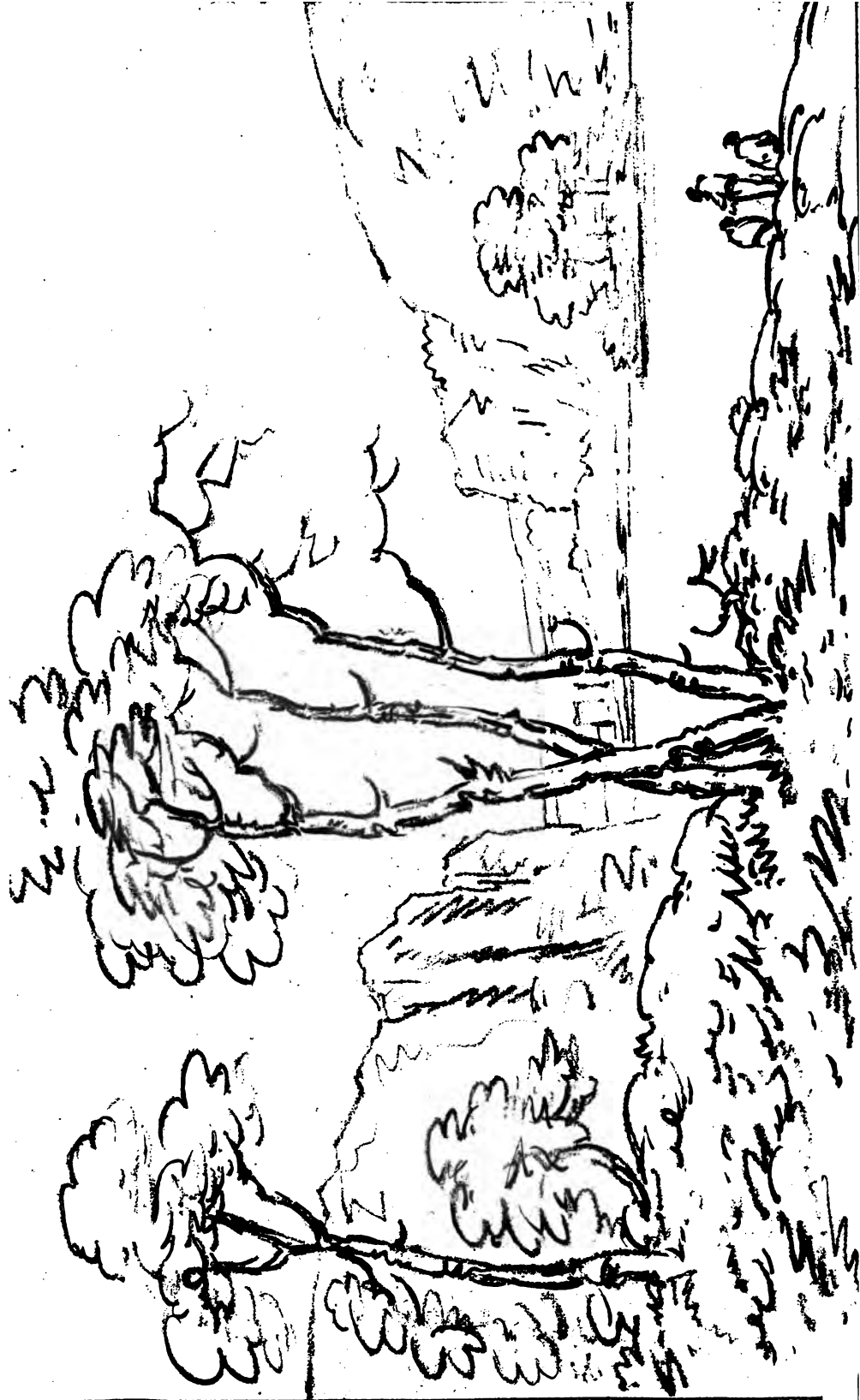
harmony to the whole, and takes off the rawness of white paper. It should be stronger or lighter, according to the depth of shadow in the drawings. The harmonizing effect of it is such, that I well remember, (if I may be allowed to mention so trifling a circumstance,) when a boy I used to make little drawings, I was never pleased with them till I had given them a brownish tint. And, as I knew no other method, I used to hold them over smoke till they had assumed such a tint as satisfied my eye.

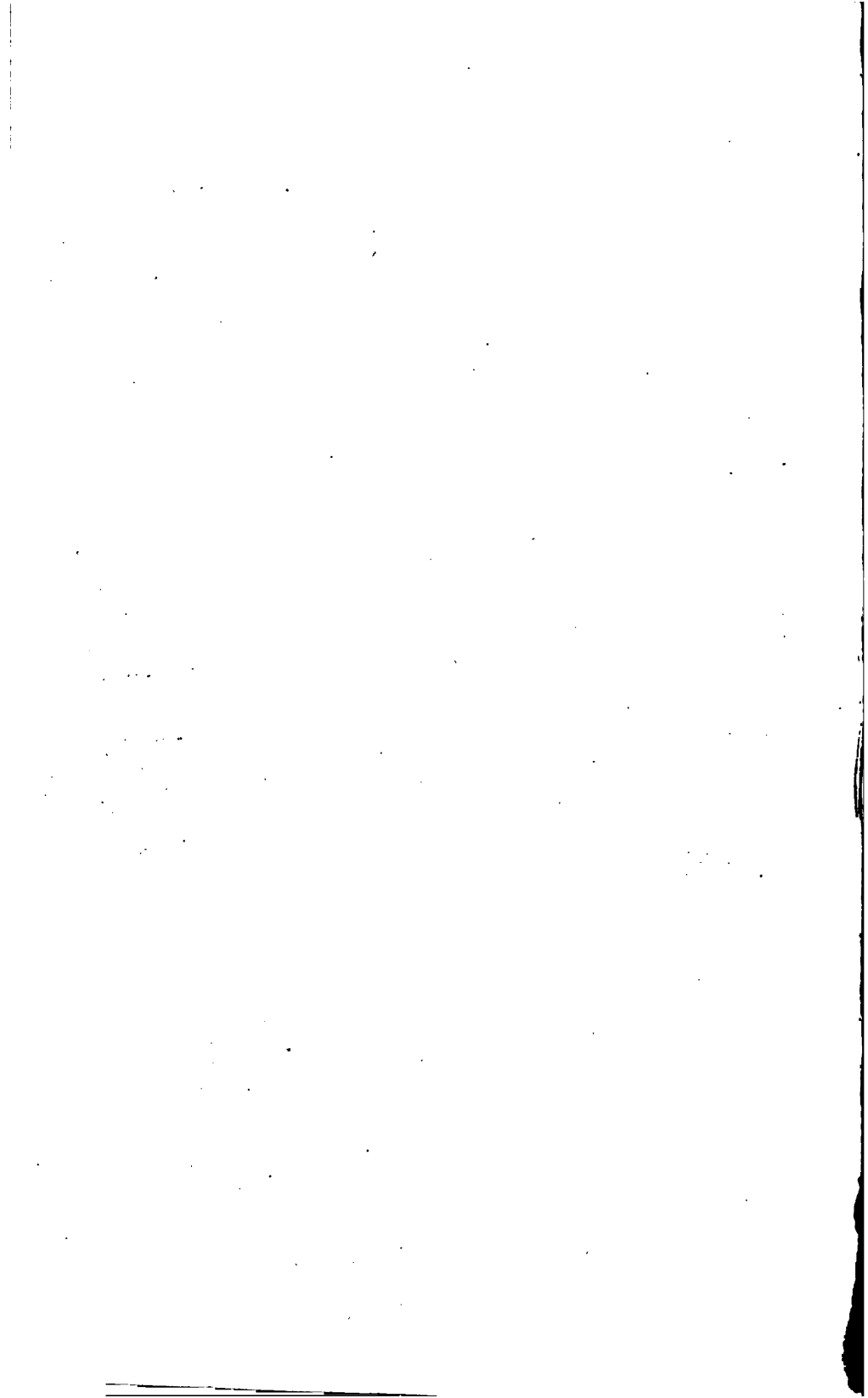
For the use of those who may perhaps like my mode of drawing, I have separated a few parcels, each parcel consisting of three drawings, two of which may be called skeletons. They will easily shew my process. The first drawing is only in its black-lead state, and points out merely the composition.—The next drawing goes a step farther. The distance is still left in black lead; but the objects on the foreground are roughly touched with a pen. This introduces some idea of *keeping*.—The third drawing adds light and shade, and carries the idea as far as my drawings commonly go.—The composition of these three drawings shews the great advantage of  
light















light and shade, and gives some idea of the disposition of light, and of its great utility in combining the several *parts* of a landscape into one *whole*.

I am very far from calling this mode of drawing the *best*, or even a *good* one, if finishing is required: but it is a very quick method of conveying picturesque ideas, and very capable of producing an effect. — Nor let the professional man laugh at these little instructions; I mean them not for him; but only for the use of those who wish for an easy mode of expressing their ideas; who draw only for amusement, and are satisfied, without colouring and high finishing, with an endeavour, by a rough sketch, to produce a little *composition* and *effect*.

Under this idea I have sometimes presumed to recommend my own drawings to those who are fond of neater work than mine, and even to young ladies. I offer them, however, only as useful in pointing out the *form* and *component parts* of a landscape, marking where the light may fall to most advantage. In all these points the drawings of young artists are most deficient. They chiefly depend on the beauty and neatness of the several objects.

But

. But if these objects are not well united, and formed into some composition, the most valuable part of the drawing is still wanting; and, what should be a landscape, becomes only a beautiful piece of patch-work.

Under many of these drawings, also, are descriptions, as if they were real scenes. Indeed, if artificial landscape cannot be thus analyzed as a *whole*, it must consist of *unconnected parts*; and can be only indifferently composed.

The *skeleton drawings* relate more to the first Essay; these *descriptive* drawings rather to the second. The former relate to the *mode of executing the parts*; the latter to the *management of a whole*.

When I fold my last drawings, I advertized a *catalogue*, and *added* to it an Essay upon the *Principles on which the Drawings were executed*. But, as the *catalogue* seemed the principal thing intended, it took the eye, and the *Essay*, which had not been advertized, was overlooked: thus three or four hundred copies of this essay were left upon my hands. I thought it a pity, therefore, that so much of my time had been taken up in vain, in writing the Essay; and so much loss should accrue to my



my endowment for want of its sale. - In the following little work, therefore, I have endeavoured to make the instruction of the Essay more complete. I have taken away the catalogue-part as now uselefs, and have added another little essay, which seems to be a proper appendage to the first. In the first Essay, printed with the catalogue, an account is given of the *principles* on which the drawings offered in sale were made. In this additional essay, the *mode of executing* them is explained.

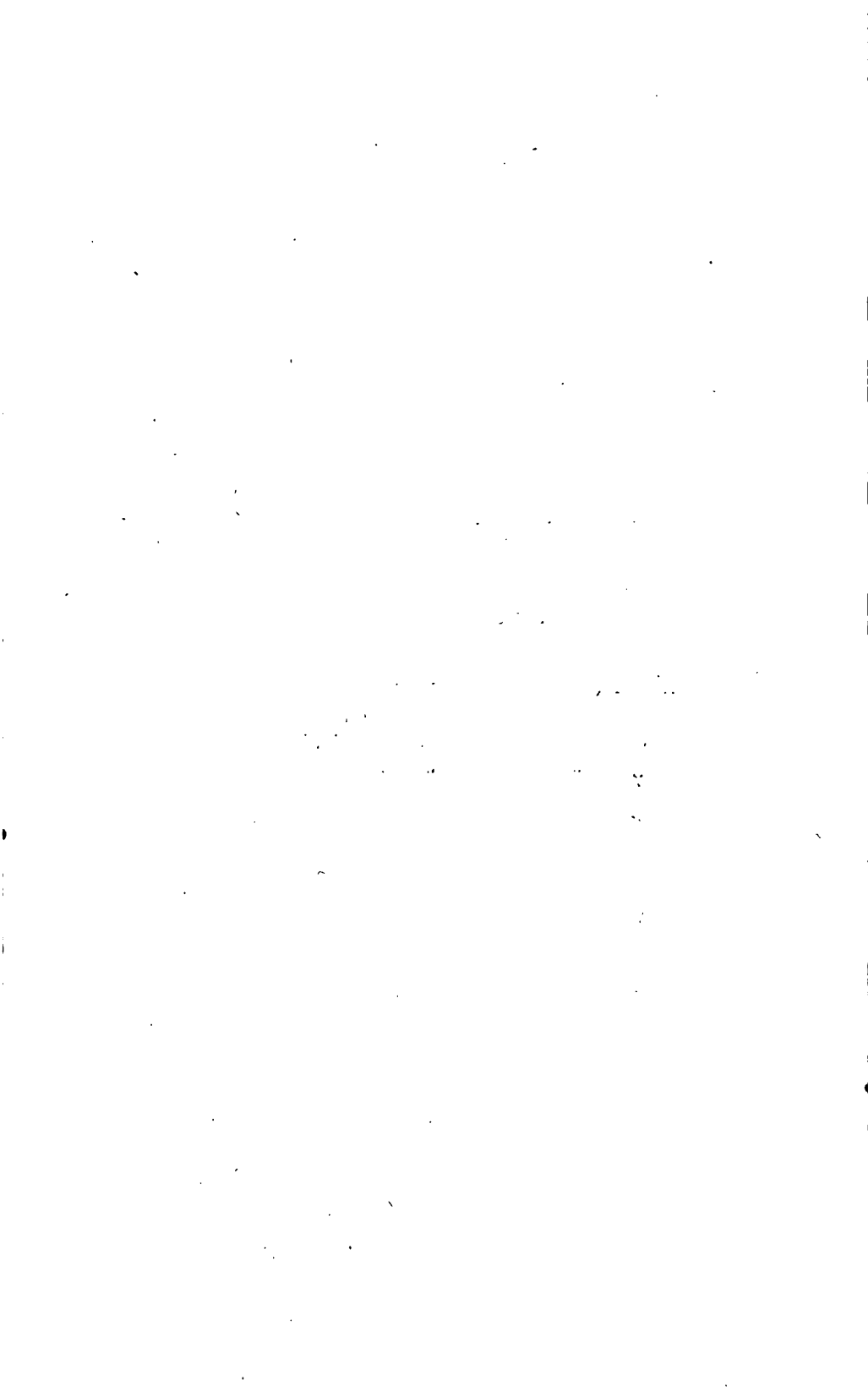
ESSAY



## ESSAY II.

ON THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE AUTHOR'S SKETCHES  
ARE COMPOSED.

——— Contented with a humble theme,  
He pours the stream of imitation down  
The vale of nature, where it creeps and winds  
Among her wild and lovely works.



MOST of the sketches here offered to the public, are *imaginary* views. But as many people take offence at *imaginary* views; and will admit such landscape only as is immediately taken from nature, I must explain what we mean by an *imaginary* view.

We acknowledge nature to be the grand storehouse of *all picturesque beauty*. The nearer we copy her, the nearer we approach perfection. But this does not affect the *imaginary view*. When we speak of *copying nature*, we speak only of particular *objects*, and particular *passages*—not of *putting the whole together* in a picturesque manner; which we seldom seek in nature, because it is seldom found. Nature gives us the materials of landscape; woods, rivers, lakes, trees, ground, and mountains: but leaves us to work them up into pictures, as our fancy leads. It is thus she sheds her bounty on other occasions. She gives us grass; but leaves us to make hay. She gives us corn; but leaves us to make bread.

Yet

Yet still in copying the several *objects, and passages of nature*, we should not copy with that painful exactness, with which Quintin Matsis, for instance, painted a face. This is a sort of plagiarism below the dignity of painting. Nature should be copied, as an author should be translated. If, like Horace's translator, you give word for word\*, your work will necessarily be insipid. But if you catch the meaning of your author, and give it freely, in the idiom of the language into which you translate, your translation may have both the *spirit*, and *truth* of the original. *Translate nature* in the same way. Nature has its idiom, as well as language; and so has painting.

Every part of nature exhibits itself in, what may be called, *prominent features*. At the first glance, without a minute examination, the difference is apparent between the bole of a beech, for instance, and that of an oak; between the foliage of an ash, and the foliage of a fir. These *discriminating* features the painter seizes; and the more faithfully he transfuses them into his work, the more ex-

\* ———, Verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus

Interpres ———

cellent will be his representation. And when these *prominent features* are naturally expressed, and judiciously combined in a *fictitious* view, that view may not only be a *natural* one, but a *more beautiful exhibition of nature*, than can easily be found in real landscape. It may even be called more *natural*, than nature itself: inasmuch as it seizes, and makes use, not only of nature's *own* materials, but of the best of each kind.

The painter of *fictitious* views goes still farther. There are few forms, either in animate, or inanimate nature, which are completely perfect. We seldom see a man, or a horse, without some personal blemish: and as seldom a mountain, or tree, in its most beautiful form. The painter of *fictitious* scenes therefore not only takes his forms from the most compleat individuals, but from the most beautiful parts of each individual; as the sculptor gave a purer figure by selecting beautiful parts, than he could have done by taking his model from the most beautiful single form.

Besides, pleasing circumstances in *nature* will not always please in *painting*. We often see effects of light, and deceptions in composition, which delight us, when we can ex-

amine, and develope them *in nature*. But when they are *represented*, like a text without its context, they may mislead; and the painter had better reject such scenery, though strictly natural. *Obscurity* in painting should be as much avoided, as in writing; unless in distances, or in some particular incidents, where obscurity is intended.

The painter of a *fictitious view* claims no greater liberty, than is willingly allowed to the history-painter; who in all subjects, taken from remote times, is necessarily obliged to his imagination, formed as it ought to be, upon nature. If he give such a character to the hero he exhibits, as does not belye the truth of history; and make such a representation of the story, as agrees with the times he represents, and with the rules of his art, his history-piece is admired, though widely different, in many circumstances, from the real fact. Le Brun's picture of Alexander entering the tent of Darius, is undoubtedly very different from any thing, that really happened: but it conveys so much the appearance of nature, and of truth, that it gives us full satisfaction.

The



The painter of *imaginary* landscape desires no other indulgence. If from an accurate observation of the most beautiful objects of nature, he can by the force of his imagination characterize, and dispose them naturally, he thinks he may be said to paint from nature.

“ The poet’s art,” says the abbé Du Bos, “ consists in making a good representation of “ things, that *might have* happened, and in “ embellishing it with proper images.”

Du Bos speaks after Aristotle, whose principle it is, that the poet is not required to relate what has *really happened*, but what *probably might happen*; which Horace translates, when he tells us, the poet,

— ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,  
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet inum.

All this as exactly regulates the art of managing *fiction* in landscape, as it does in poetry. And indeed the general rules of the best critics for the direction of the drama, direct us with great propriety in picturesque composition. — It is true indeed we may, for the sake of curiosity, wish to have a *particular scene exactly represented*: but, the indulgence of curiosity does not make the picture better.

Besides the advantage in point of *composition*, the *imaginary* scene preserves more the *character* of landscape, than the *real* one. A landscape may be rural, or sublime—inhabited, or desolate—cultivated, or wild. Its *character*, of whatever kind, should be observed throughout. Circumstances, which suit one species, contradict another. Now in nature we rarely see this attention. Seldom does she produce a scene *perfect in character*. In her best works she often throws in some feature at variance with the rest—some trivial circumstance mixed often with sublime scenery: and injudicious painters have been fond of affecting such inconsistencies. I have seen a view of the Colosseum, for instance, adorned with a woman hanging linen to dry under its walls. Contrasts of this kind may suit the moralist, the historian, or the poet, who may take occasion to descant on the instability of human affairs. But the *eye*, which has nothing to do with *moral sentiments*, and is conversant only with *visible forms*, is disgusted by such unnatural union.

There is still a *higher character* in landscape, than what arises from the *uniformity of objects*—and that is the power of furnishing  
images

images *analogous to the various feelings, and sensations of the mind*. If the landscape-painter can call up such representations, (which seems not beyond his art) where would be the harm of saying, that landscape, like history-paintings, hath its ethics!

——— Such thy pencil, Claude!  
It makes us pant beneath thy summer-sun,  
And shiver in thy cool autumnal eve.

To convey however ideas of this kind is the perfection of the art: it requires the splendour, and variety of colours; and is not to be attempted in such trivial sketches as these. In the mean time, the *painter of imaginary scenes* pursues the best mode of forming these *ethical* compositions, as all nature lies before him, and he has her whole storehouse at command.

To what hath been said in favour of *imaginary views*, nothing more pertinent, can be added than a few remarks from a gentleman\* well known for his superior taste in painting.

“ You ask me, whether I have ever seen a  
“ *correct* view of any *natural scene*, which quite  
“ satisfied me? and you confess you rarely  
“ have. I am perfectly of your opinion. There is  
“ a servile individuality in the *mere* portrait of

\* Sir George Beaumont, Bart.

“ a view which always displeases me; and is  
 “ even less interesting than a map. It must be full  
 “ of awkward lines; and the artist, cramped  
 “ by given shapes, gives his work always the  
 “ air of a copy. The old masters rarely  
 “ painted views from nature. I believe never,  
 “ but when commissioned. Like poets they  
 “ did not confine themselves to matter of fact;  
 “ they chose rather to exhibit what a country  
 “ suggested, than what it really comprized;  
 “ and took, as it were, the essence of things.  
 “ The servile imitator seems to me to mistake  
 “ the *body* for the *soul*; and will never touch  
 “ the heart. Besides, every thing looks well  
 “ in nature. Lumpish forms, and counter-  
 “ acting lines, touched by her exquisite hand,  
 “ are hardly noticed. But in art they are  
 “ truly disgusting; and the artist must avail  
 “ himself of every advantage, if he wishes to  
 “ cope with her. If he attack her on equal  
 “ terms, he is sure of being disgracefully van-  
 “ quished.”

Having said thus much in favour of *imagi-  
 nary composition*, we are compelled however by  
 truth to add, on the other side, that a constant  
 application to his own resources is apt to lead  
 the artist without great care, into the disagree-  
 able

able business of repeating himself. If he would avoid this, he must frequently refresh his memory with nature; which, however slovenly in her composition, is the only school where he must study forms: or, if he cannot always have recourse to nature for the object he wants, he must turn over his common-place-book. This, it may be hoped, abounds with forms and passages, which may furnish a sufficient variety for his choice.

The hints, from which most of these sketches offered to the public are taken, were collected from mountainous, and lake scenery, where the author chiefly sought his picturesque ideas.

Such scenery affords two great sources of picturesque composition—*sublimity*, or *simple grandeur*; and *grandeur united with beauty*. The former arises from a *uniformity of large parts*, without *ornament*, without *contrast*, and without *variety*. The latter arises from the introduction of *these appendages*, which forms scenery of a *mixed kind*.

Some of these sketches are attempts at *sublimity* or *simple grandeur*. But as this is an idea, which is neither easily caught, nor ge-

nerally admired, most of them aim at mixing *grandeur* and *beauty* together.

But whether the artist paint from *nature* or from his *imagination*, certain general rules, which belong to his art, should never be transgressed.

In the first place, he should always remember, that the excellence of landscape-painting consists in bringing before the *spectator's eye*, or rather in raising to *his imagination* such scenes as are most *pleasing*, or most *striking*. Every painter therefore should have this idea always in view; and should paint such scenes only. In the choice of these interesting subjects he chiefly discovers his taste. The full effect indeed of such scenes can only be given by the *pallet*; yet it should be aimed at, as far as possible, even in the *sketch*.

Again, a landscape, as well as a history-piece, should have some *master-subject*. We often indeed see landscape composed without much idea of this kind. One piece of ground is tacked to another, with little meaning or connection. We should attend more to the simplicity of a *whole*. Some uniform, distinct







inct plan should always be presented ; and the several parts should have relation to each other. The scenery about a castle, a ruin, a bridge, a lake, a winding river, or some remarkable disposition of ground, may make the leading part of a landscape ; and if it be set off with a suitable distance, if necessary, and a proper fore-ground, we have subject enough for a picture. In short, there should be some idea of *unity* in the *design*, as well as in the *composition* ; and every part should concur in shewing it to advantage. The parts being thus few and simple, the eye at once conceives the *general idea*. If the landscape be a finished piece, all these parts should be enriched with a variety of *detail*, which, at the same time, must unite in embellishing the *general effect*.

Still farther, the *probability* of every part should appear. A castle should never be placed where a castle cannot be supposed to stand. A lake should, generally have the appendage of a mountainous country ; and the course of a winding river should be made intelligible by the folding of the hills. In some of the drawings now offered to the public, it is endeavoured to explain this idea by a few remarks on the back of each. These  
explanatory

explanatory drawings are particularly mentioned in the catalogue. Indeed, a landscape, which cannot bear to be analyzed in this way, must be faulty. Sometimes, it is true, we find in nature itself improbable circumstances. The artist for that reason rejects *them*. But he is inexcusable, if he *purposely* introduce them.

The *general effect* of a picture is produced by a unity of *light*, as well as of *composition*. When we have gotten the several parts of a landscape together, — that is, when we are satisfied with the *composition*, still we cannot judge of the *effect*; nor appreciate the picture, till we have *introduced the light*, which makes a complete change in a landscape, either for the better or the worse. It is thus in nature. The appearance of the same country, under different effects of light, is totally different. These effects therefore cannot be too much studied; and should be studied when the artist *finishes a picture*, by making different sketches of the same subject, so as to ascertain the best. This is not always perhaps enough attended to. In *painting* indeed, a bad distribution of light is less discernable. The variety of colouring

ing imposes on the sight; but in a collection of *prints* or *drawings*, the defects in light are obvious.

*Gradation* is another principle with regard to light, which is very essential in point of beauty. Neither lights, nor ~~shades~~, should *uniformly* spread over one surface; but should *graduate* from more to less. *Gradation* in light and shade, though not always seen in nature, is however frequently enough seen to be acknowledged among its best sources of beauty. It removes that disgusting effect, which in sound is called *monotony*; and produces, in its room, a pleasing variety on the surfaces of objects.

The illustration of these few principles (as far as a sketch, or rough drawing can illustrate them) is all that is aimed at in the drawings now offered to sale. Few of them will afford more than the *rude conception* of a landscape. They pretend to ~~some~~ degree of *composition* and *effect*; but to little farther. Hard lines must be excused, and an inaccurate detail. They may perhaps have somewhat more of *science* in them, than of *art*. What merit they have, is readily allowed without affectation.

Though

Though they cannot well claim the title of landscapes, they may furnish a few general hints; and some of them might be made pictures perhaps in the hands of a good master, who could furnish the *detail*. At the same time, thus much may be said, that we always conceive the *detail* to be the inferior part of a picture. We look with more pleasure at a landscape well designed, composed, and enlightened, though the parts are inaccurately, or roughly executed, than at one, in which the *parts* are well made out, but the *whole* ill-conceived. These ideas were once paradoxically, but well explained by a gentleman, who thought himself a better artist, after his hand began to shake, and his eyes to fail. By the shaking of my hand, he would say, my stroke, which was before formal, becomes more free: and when my eyes were good, I entered more into the *detail* of objects: now I am more impressed with the *whole*.

In *teaching* to draw, the stress is laid at first, as it ought to be, on the *parts*. If a scholar can touch a tree, or a building with accuracy, he has so far attained perfection. But it is the perfection only of a scholar. The great principles

ciples of his art are still behind. Often, however, our *riper* judgment is swayed by the excellence of the *parts*, in preference to a *whole*. The merit of a picture is fixed perhaps by the *master's touch*; or by the beauty of his *colouring*; or some other inferior excellence. But a great critic in arts, formed a different opinion;

Æmilium circa ludum faber imus, & ungues  
 Exprimet, & molles imitabitur ære capillos,  
 Infelix operis *summâ*, quia ponere *totum*  
 Nesciet.

A few of the drawings here exhibited, may be called *studies*; that is, the same subject hath been attempted in different ways, both with regard to *composition*, and *effect*.

In a few of them, the more redundant designs of Claude are simplified. A very numerous collection of prints were taken from the drawings of that master. Claude's originals are in the hands of the Duke of Devonshire. They exhibit many *beautiful parts*, but rarely a *simple whole*; though the collection, for what reason is not obvious, is styled *the book of truth*.

A few of the drawings here offered to sale, are slightly tinted; not as finished drawings;  
 but

but just enough to give a distinction among objects. Yet even in these slight sketches, unless there is some appearance of *harmony*, a very little degree of colouring glares. When therefore you have put in your light and shade, with Indian ink, spread over the *whole* a slight wash of red and yellow mixed, which make an orange. It may incline either to one or the other, as may best suit your composition. A cold bluish tint may sometimes have effect. This general wash will produce a degree of *harmony*. While the sky is yet moist, tint the upper part of it, if it be orange, with blue, blending them together. Or if a little part only of the sky appear, it may be all blue, or all orange, as may have the best effect. When the sky is dry, throw a little blue, or what Reeves calls a *neutral tint*\*, into the distances; and over any water; that may be in the landscape. Then introduce your browns, which are of various kinds, into the foreground; but let them be introduced slightly; and when all is dry, you may touch some of the brightest parts with dead green, or a little gall-stone. Burnt terra-de-Sienna, mixed with a little gall-stone, make a good tint for foliage.

\* See his box of colours.

Some apology may perhaps be necessary for the uniformity of one principle, which runs through most of the designs here exhibited; and that is the practice of *throwing the foreground into shade*. Many artists throw their *lights* on the *foreground*; and often, no doubt, with good effect. But, in general, we are perhaps better pleased with a *dark* foreground. It makes a kind of graduating shade, from the eye through the removed parts of the picture; and carries off the distance better than any other contrivance. By throwing the *light* on the *foreground*, this *gradation* is *inverted*. In many of these sketches the lights were at first *left* on the foreground; but on examining them with a fresh eye, they glared so disagreeably, that they were afterwards put out. — Besides, the foreground is commonly but an *appendage*. The middle distance generally makes the scene, and requires the most distinction. In history-painting it is the reverse. The *principal* part of the subject occupies the *foreground*; and the *removed* parts of the picture form the *appendages*. In a landscape too, when a building, or other object of consequence, appears on the foreground, and the distance is of little value, the light, on the same principle, may

may then fall on the *foreground*: though a building is sometimes thrown, even in that case, with more effect into shadow. — In most of these sketches it may be added, that the foreground is only just *washed in*. If the drawings had been *finished*, the foregrounds should have been broken into parts. But the author sues for candour on the head of *finishing*.

An apology may perhaps be due, on the other side also, for preserving too strong a light on some of the removed parts of the composition. In general, no part of the surface of a country (except, here and there, the reflected parts of water) should be so light, as the lightest parts of the sky. But this rule is not always observed in these sketches; partly because in work so slight, it might induce heaviness; and partly, because a little colour might easily supply the want of shade, if these sketches should ever be honoured with painting from them.

With regard to *figures* introduced in landscape, there is often great deformity. Bad appendages of this sort are very disgusting: and yet we often see views enlivened, (if it can be called



called enlivening) with ill-drawn figures of men, horses, cows, sheep, waggons, and other objects, which have not even the *air* of the things they represent. Or perhaps if the figures of a landscape are tolerably touched, too great a *number* of them are introduced; or they are *ill put together*; or perhaps *ill-suited* to the scene. Some of these circumstances are too often found in the best landscapes — as often in those of Claude, as of any other master. And yet I have heard, that Claude had a higher opinion of his own excellence in figures, than in any other part of his profession. Sir Peter Lely, we are told, wished for one of Claude's best landscapes; but delicately hinted to him, that he should rather chuse it without figures, Claude felt himself hurt at Sir Peter's depreciating that excellence, which he himself valued. He filled his landscape therefore with more figures, than he commonly introduced; and desired Sir Peter, if he did not like it, to leave it for those who understood the composition of landscape better. — This picture, is at present, I am told, in the hands of Mr. Agar in London; and the history of it affords good instruction to such conceited artists as value

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themselves on what nobody else values. Many landscape painters however might be named, who knew how to touch a small figure, and could people their landscapes with great beauty. Among these the late Mr. Wilson, one of the best landscape-painters, that hath appeared in our days, might be mentioned. Other painters, who could not paint figures themselves, have borrowed assistance from those who could. The late ingenious Mr. Barret, who painted every part of inanimate nature with singular beauty, had the discretion to get his landscapes generally peopled by a better hand than his own.

It cannot be supposed, the figures in these sketches are set up as models. So far from it, that they do not even pretend to the name of *figures*. They are meant only as substitutes to shew, where two or three figures might be placed to advantage. And yet even such figures are better than those, in which *finishing* is attempted and legs and arms set on without either life, air, or proportion. Indeed the figures here introduced, are commonly dressed in cloaks, which conceal their deformities. If legs and arms be not well set on, they are certainly better concealed.

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As I can say nothing myself therefore on the subject of figures, I have gotten a few hints, and examples from my brother, Mr. Sawrey Gilpin; who, if my prejudices do not mislead me, is well skilled in this part of his art.

These hints respect the *size*, the *relative proportion of the parts*, the *balance of figures at rest, or in motion*; and what appears to him the easiest mode of sketching figures\*: to which are added a few of such groups as may be introduced in landscape.

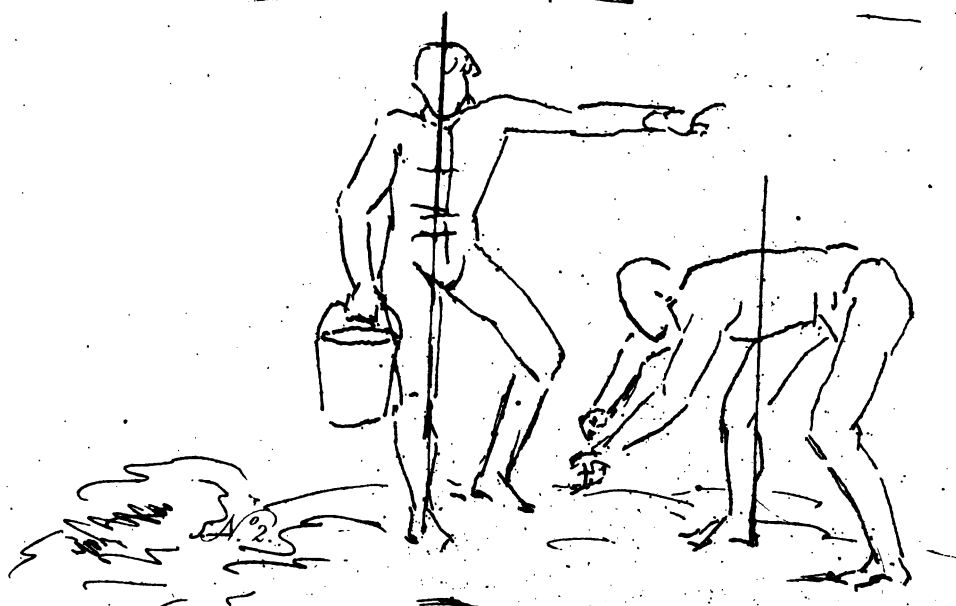
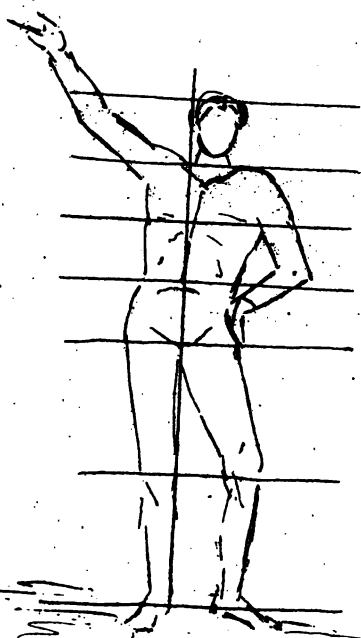
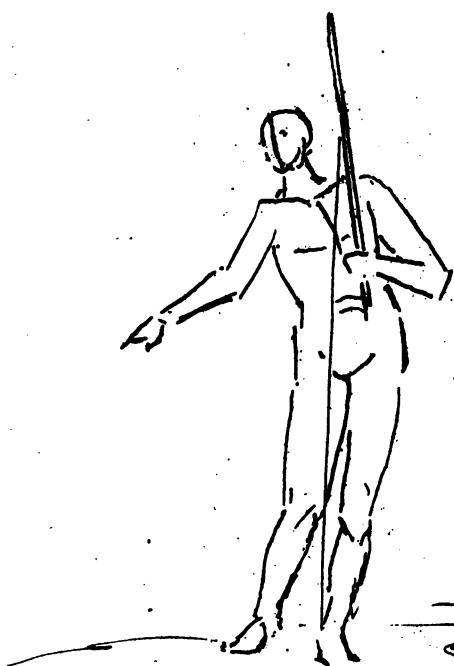
In the first place, with regard to the *size* of figures, as the known dimensions of the human body give a scale to the objects around, exactness in this point is a matter of no little consequence. If the figure be too large, it diminishes the landscape—if too small, it makes it enormous: and yet it seems no very

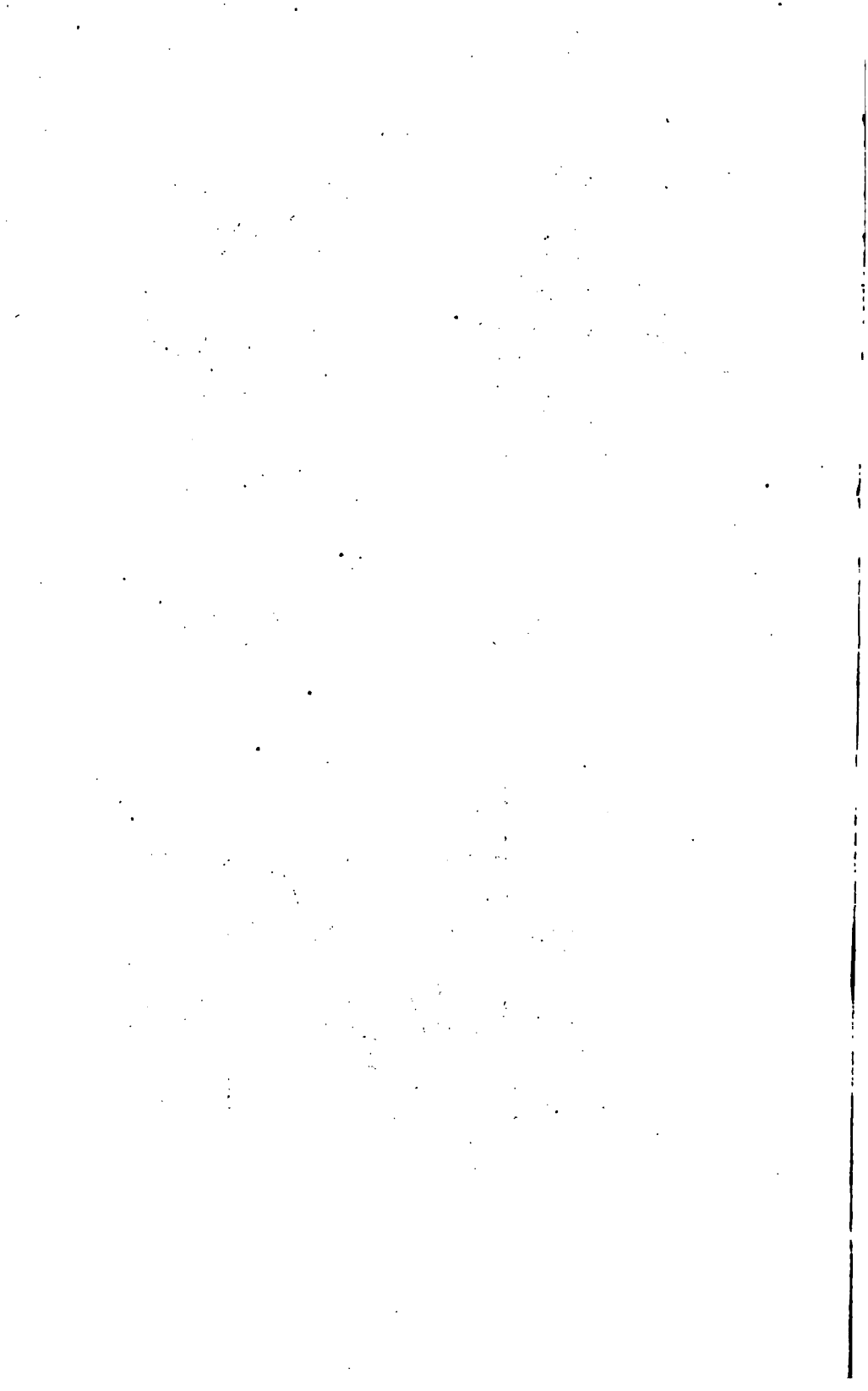
\* Mr. S. G. had once thoughts of giving the public a few remarks on landscape-figures, both human and animal; and illustrating his remarks by a variety of etched examples. It would be a work (in my opinion at least) highly useful to all, who draw or paint landscape. But I fear his engagements will prevent his ever bringing this work to such perfection, as would satisfy himself; and this little extract from it is probably the only part of it that will ever appear.

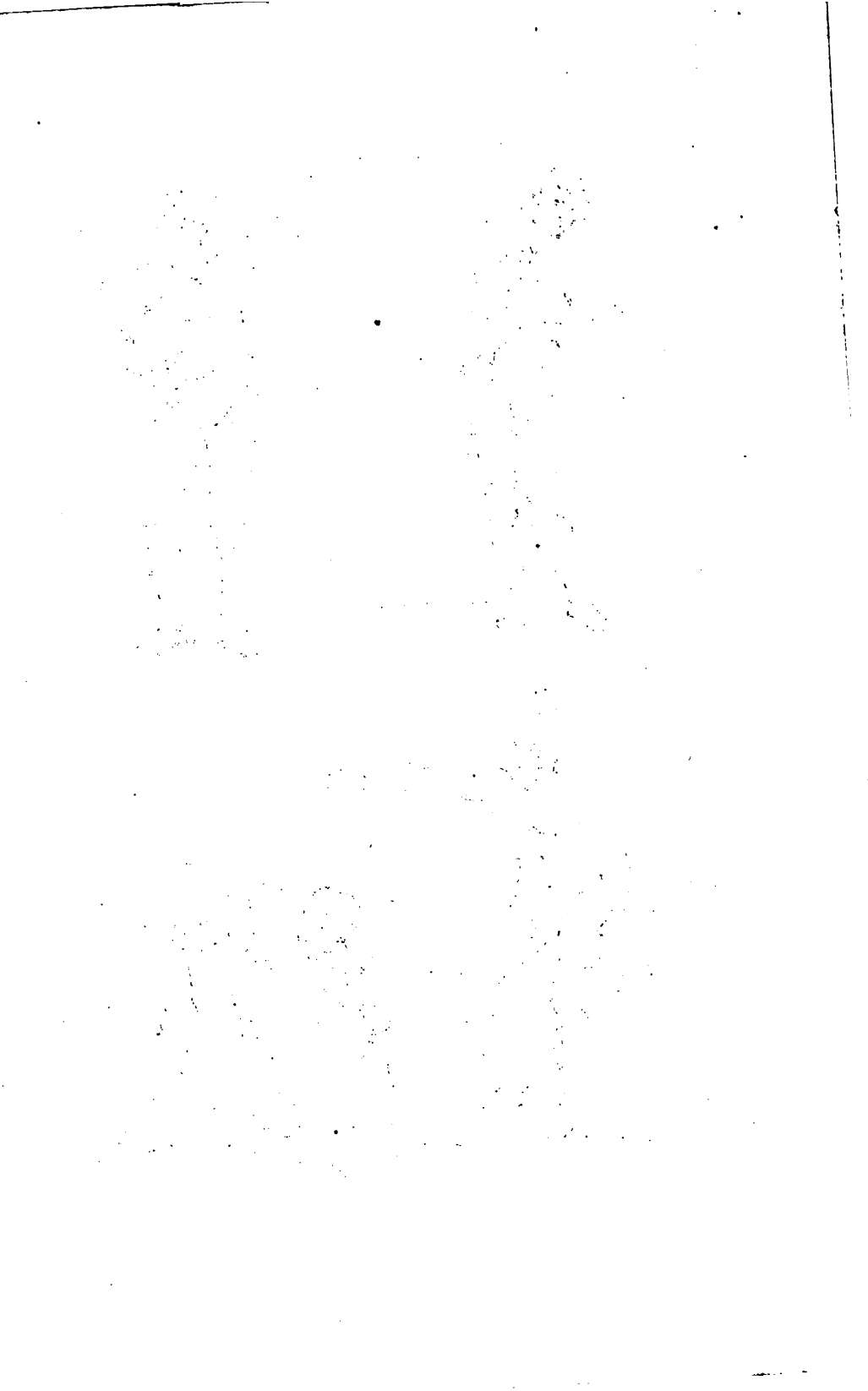
difficult matter to adjust the proportion, by comparing the figure with some object on the same ground.

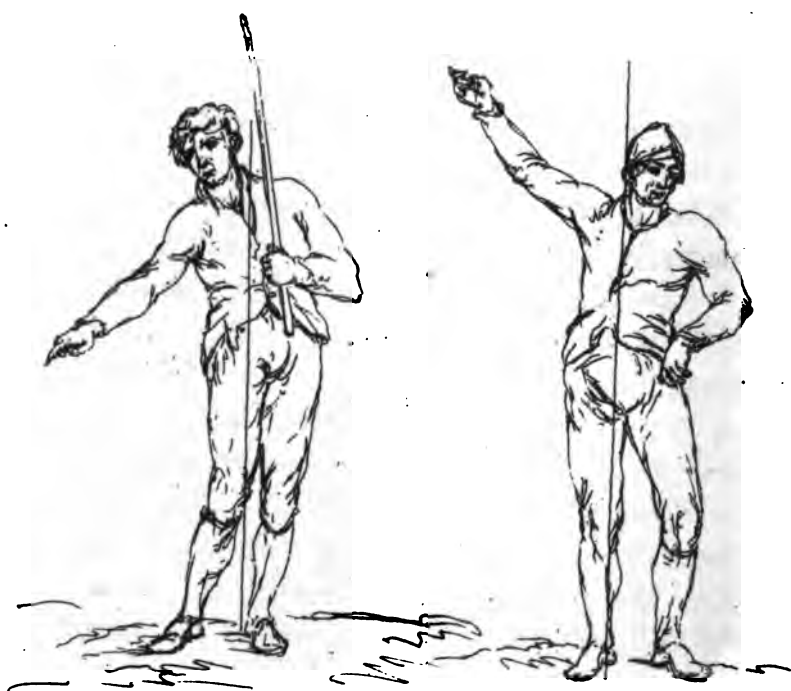
Though in figures, meant only to adorn landscape, the exactness of *anatomy* is not required, yet a small degree of *disproportion* strikes the eye with disgust, even in a sketch — in the *head* and *limbs* especially. The body naturally forms itself into two parts of equal length. From the crown of the head to the point where the limbs divide, is one half. This may be subdivided into four parts. The head and neck to the top of the shoulder make one of these sub-divisions: from the top of the shoulder to the lower line of the muscle of the breast we measure another: from thence to the hips a third; and from the hips to the point where the limbs divide, a fourth. The *legs* and *arms* admit each of a division into two parts. In the former, the upper part of the knee is the point of division; as the elbow is in the latter, when the hand is closed. When the arm hangs down, and the fingers are extended, their points will reach the middle of the thigh. But though we have no occasion to observe this division accurately in ornamental figures,

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it may be useful to have a *general idea* of it.

The *balance*, however, of a figure, even in landscape, is matter of great consequence. If every thing else were right but this, the effect of the figure would be destroyed. A figure intended to be in *motion*, from an unhappy poise of its limbs, would appear to *stand still*. And from the same cause, a *standing* figure would appear to be a *falling* one. The balance of *standing* figures may be regulated by a supposed perpendicular dividing the body, from the crown of the head, into two parts. If the legs bear equal weight, this line will fall exactly between them. If the weight is borne unequally, the line will fall nearer that leg which bears the greatest proportion : and if the whole burden be thrown on one leg, the line will pass through the centre of its heel. When the weight is thus unequally distributed, the shoulder on one side forms a counterpoise to the hip on the other : and when the shoulder is not a sufficient counterpoise, as in the case of bearing a weight in one hand, the contrary arm is thrown out to restore the balance. — *Stooping* figures come under the same rule ;  
only

only the perpendicular will arise from the centre of gravity, at the feet of the figure, and divide it into equal parts. The *progressive* motion of figures may also be adjusted by a perpendicular, drawn from the foot, that bears the weight; the figure being projected beyond it in proportion to the velocity, with which it is represented to move\*.

A few words may be added with regard to *the easiest manner of sketching slight figures in landscape*. To attempt finishing the limbs at first, would lead to stiffness. If the figures are placed near the eye, a little attention to *drawing* is requisite: and the simplest, and perhaps the best method will be, to sketch them in lines nearly straight, under the regulations above given. A little swelling of the muscles, and a few touches to mark the extremities, the articulation of the joints, and the sharp folds of the drapery, may afterwards be given, and will be sufficient†.

After gaining a knowledge in the *form* of figures, the next point is to *group* them. The form depends on *rule*; the group more on

\* To illustrate these remarks, see plate 1.

† To illustrate these remarks, see plate 2.





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*taste*. A few landscape-groups are here specified, which may assist the young artist in combining his figures\*.

With regard to his own *drawings*, the author hath only to observe farther, that they will appear to most advantage, if they are examined by candle-light; or, if in day-light, by intercepting a strong light. This mode of viewing them will best shew the *effect*, in which chiefly consists the little merit they have; and will likewise conceal the faultiness of the *execution* in the several details. Such of these drawings however as are tinted, cannot be examined by candle-light.

\* See plate 3.

THE END.









